Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Student Union

2019

2019 BA Journal of Visual and Critical Studies

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Journal of Visual
& Critical Studies
2019

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Isabelle Fellini and Caoilinn Brown, on behalf of the Editorial Committee

Contents

↓CRITICAL ESSAYS

↓EXHIBITION REVIEWS

↓THESIS ABSTRACTS

Axioms of Contemporary Art, and Some Results
By Sandy Callander

This paper considers the internal logic of contemporary art, its applications in a neoliberal art market, what it means to *be* contemporary, and some moments of breakage. Using Liam Gillick's text "Contemporary art does not account for that which is taking place" (2010) as a starting point, I seek to address some developments in the history of contemporary art, and more specifically some trends which have emerged out of it from the 1990's through the last decade. This is done as a method to point out key areas of concern in the commodification of contemporary art as a still-happening historical period, and certain market practices which I believe to be detrimental to the state of the art field.

"The term 'contemporary art' is marked by an excessive usefulness."[1] Galleries, museums, auction houses, and the like need not consider the nuances of what might be called *current* art. The blanket term of 'contemporary' oversimplifies what are perhaps sophisticated art practices that break from the already-historicized genre of contemporary art, in a function of general commodification. It does not describe a practice, but a "being in the context"[2] which reinforces an 'anything-whatever being made now' idea of the contemporary, but there's also a problem there. This occurs in light of market generalisations of art since 1990, or 1958, or 1945, or a number of other years in the twentieth century, depending who you ask. "Post-war" and "Art after 1945" are both common genres in museums and auction houses.[3] It begs the question of where not only disparate artists but also disparate and overlapping historical movements fit into a more complex understanding of art in its various forms.

What constitutes the image of the contemporary?

Anything at all, apparently.

"Contemporary art is necessarily inclusive."[4] However, this is not necessarily a good thing. The shift towards an accusation of 'being contemporary' makes perfect sense, especially in light of how the label and accusation of utopia evolved in speech and sentiment through the second half of the twentieth century–although there is a distinct difference between the two words and the positions they occupy. For one, the word utopian is actually used by people to describe their own goals, actions, and aims. Architects do not call themselves contemporary, nor do artists for the most part. There is something missing in terms of the relationship between a superimposed character and generational gaps. This may be reconciled in some sense by referring to some figures in the twentieth century who rejected the labels imposed onto them, but the situation has drastically changed from the times of Minimalism and Conceptual Art. The inclusivity of contemporary art manifests as a totalising backdrop on which artists emerging from the late 1980's onward are placed as both a convenience and an insidious step toward a globalised ecology of art.

Perhaps someone remembers back to the etymology of contemporary: *With time*.[5] Due to its historicization and academicization the term itself becomes simultaneously redundant in a critical discourse or context,[6] and a perfectly useless descriptor for this extreme generalisation. It is too convenient to mean anything significant to those who are actually moving and evolving with time, an attribute that could be summed up by the words dynamic or engaged.

It is not a term that is easily reflected on or changed–at least not functionally.[7] The argument is in the gaps between making art and its presentation or exchange. In a press release you may have a statement like, '[artist]'s work attempts to diagnose the wrongs of formal abstraction, through investigating its qualities of arbitrariness and colour-based meaning, while employing traditional methodologies of painting as a historical medium.' And sure, this might in itself be some sort of sophisticated art practice, full of references and cleverness and a real, earnest desire to make good on this promise. But its exchange is one of monetary sums and business politics. Phrases like this become superfluous and performative; an attempt to make the work seem important and valuable culturally, and therefore valuable monetarily.

The word inventory might be important here. It reflects the values of those who buy and sell art with any sort of rigour or frequency—any individual subjectivities aside, which barely figure into the equation anymore. It is about marketing, particularly marketing the artist as a brand, which to a potential buyer is worth investing in. The inventory is accumulative; there is always more. Contemporary art exists in a surplus production ecology, ironically enough. It is a very un-contemporary methodology, in terms of producing articles for exchange. The contemporary is marked by the rise of services as opposed to goods, it is qualified by the functional idea of "on demand, just in time."[8] Which is not that strange, from a certain point of view, in relation to young artists represented by colossal gallery networks such as Larry Gagosian—the easy, fallback example, but also probably the best for precisely that reason.

"The inclusiveness of the contemporary is under attack, as this very inclusiveness has helped suppress a critique of what art is and more importantly what comes next. We know what comes next as things stand—more contemporary art."[9] This is good for commercial art institutions, of course. No more rebranding, no new terminology, no need to convince potential buyers of the significance of a new movement—the 'blue chip' gallery becomes a type of pinnacle. I wonder if resistance to change in this sense is structural or incidental. I'm not sure it makes a large difference either way. Artists have always been a rather disobedient group, but making art is often prohibitively expensive. In places where there is no state-funded model of the art system, private investments and the selling of artworks are a fundamentally necessary tool for ensuring a sustainable local art system.

There are moments of breakage from the commodified market. These exist in discussions and parallel practices,[10] which one might be inclined to call the discursive, or the social. The educational turn does this as well, which can be understood through the writings of curators such as Paul O'Neill or Irit Rogoff.[11] It is practically discursive in and of itself, if viewed in an art context. These types of practices find an articulated contemporary form, much to the chagrin of those who engage in these sorts of things. Such forms can still be consumed, commodified, and sold. In 2018 MoMA acquired one of Rirkrit Tiravanija's more notable cooking works, *Untitled 1992/1995 (Free/Still)* (1992/1995/2007/2011), in exchange for an undisclosed

artwork within their collection. MoMA owns the activity of feeding a group a specific meal in a specific setting, though technically only as long as Tiravanija carries it out himself. Thinking about the educational turn, or a different field that has been widely referred to as 'relational art/aesthetics,' the idea of the social sphere outside of art institutions becomes a pertinent locus of critical collectivity while maintaining a sort of independence. Documentary practices are consumed much like social ones (though many of these consist of photographs and are therefore ripe for sale as art objects). Of course, in regard to the art market, it begs the question about how effective the exercise is in the Canadian context, or if it is even worth discussing at all outside of international sales.

Returning to the Educational Turn, it finds its articulations in projects such as *unitednationsplaza* (2006) which took place in Berlin. Hosted by e-flux, it was a free school which hosted lectures, seminars, conferences, and other discursive events presented by artists and curators over the space of one year, and was followed by a version in Mexico City and a condensed, hybrid form which took place at The New Museum in New York City. It was a project dedicated to examining contemporary art and its conditions, one which was entirely free from commerciality in art and actively rejected it.[12]

These moments of breakage are determined by the mediation of one's own practice; what to make and why to make it. In relation to a commercialised art sector, it is not even tolerated. Production accelerates or continues at a set pace, in a sort of decentralised art factory model. There is a demand and requirement for work to be produced which may belie the ethical demands for an artist in the twenty-first century. This requirement is employed in a function of legitimizing the "anything-whatever" as a commodity object, especially if made by a hot name in certain gallery networks. Zombie Formalism is a term coined by critic Walter Robinson in 2014 to describe the new wave of generic American abstraction,[13] most of which is seen as vapid and devoid of any real meaning. But it does really sell–perhaps being vapid is precisely the reason why this is the case. The work is not challenging, or difficult to understand, or all that political in any way. It is very quick to produce, and actually having an understanding of art may lessen one's enjoyment of the work: a perfect aesthetic object of exchange for the art. Although, there are perhaps some interesting

methods of making that have come out of it. Jacob Kassay was the first person to ever make an electroplated "painting"—although that really just means he electroplated a rectangle. Lucien Smith's rain paintings are supposedly the first ever made with a fire extinguisher. Both of these bodies of work demand a price upwards of \$300 000 per 'painting': apparently the ever-shrinking realm of novelty or artificial milestones is still worth something. Some other names associated with this 'mini-movement' include Oscar Murillo, Dan Colen, Adam McEwen, and Parker Ito.

This section is not a backlash against abstraction, but rather more of an inquiry into what exactly is driving a significant portion of the New York art market. Fairly young artists picked up by large galleries or gallery networks, producing tremendous quantities of work, which are then taken to auction or shown for sale almost immediately after they dry. There is barely a second to think, to mediate the work or their practice; the demand is too high. And so it goes, they get swept along by the dealers, cannibalised.

The recent explosion of 'content producers' is perhaps an area of consideration in terms of the commercialisation of culture. The monetisation of figures on Instagram and YouTube presents something interesting if not directly related to the art market. This occurrence is, however, a sort of parallel practice to that of commodity exchange in the twenty-first century. It is a methodology of communication, advertising, and dissemination of information that may be consumed and appropriated by the commercial art world in the near future. To be an 'influencer' requires a "sophisticated sense of networking," just as being a figure in the contemporary culture sector does.[14] The relationships in the networks are of course different, but functionally they are quite similar. This idea of networking has come up in information theory since about 1948 but due to our globalised, socially integrated society, the advancement of telecommunications has advanced at an unprecedented rate: the network expands and contracts simultaneously.

I wonder if one could draw a link between the operations of content producers and art dealers or gallery owners. Between networking, always having something to show, and interacting with those that follow or do business with them, there begins to be a fairly congruent picture forming. With the newly developed position of social media

manager now being a necessity at not only commercial galleries but really all art institutions, no matter how large or small, the circle may be very close to complete. The art market is reaching record prices or sales almost every year. With the proliferation of online presence, telecommunications, and social media activity, I do not find this to be very surprising. There are no signs of slowing down. Any falter in sales is quickly accounted for and surpassed. There will be no breakthrough as it stands. There is no revolution to speak of.

The market thrives due to the tolerance of specific stories in contemporary art.[15] Never mind the young artists picked up straight out of art school who are cannibalised by unethical inflation practices. They are clearly not important. What is important is that a capitalist society is comfortable with contemporary art.[16] It relishes in it—because it can always be shown and always be sold; the perfect failsafe supercurrency for corporations and the super rich. The brand name 'style era' that we are in is the perfect narrative of art in capitalism. The sort of nightmare scenario for those not interested in playing the market is actually the cessation of production. Which admittedly does not make a lot of sense, and could eventually be absorbed, but is a possibility nonetheless. What happens if this occurs? There is still more art to sell. The historically significant works will always support the network. The schools are another problem, leading to younger generations who are more than willing to proverbially sell their soul. These are a type of insurance policy for the commercial art world. There is always history, and there is always more—and once you are in it, you are sort of stuck there. There are no real off-ramps on the Art Market Super Highway.[17]

Sandy Callander's art practice is largely concerned with slippage of meaning in communication and visual interpretation through the study of how organizational systems manifest themselves. These areas are explored through installation and text-objects, as well as abstract photographic work. A main focus of his academic research has been in the function of art-world systems, and in locating a definition of 'Contemporary Art' as a movement, in place of a historical period.

1   Liam Gillick, "Contemporary art does not account for that which is taking place," e-flux 21, December 2010, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/21/67664/contemporary-art-does-not-account-for-that-which-is-taking-place/.
2   Ibid.
3   "Top 10 Post-War and Contemporary Artworks of 2018," BlouinArtInfo, December 27, 2018, https://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/3454093/top-10-post-war-and-contemporary-artworks-of-2018.
4   Gillick, "Contemporary Art."
5   Boris Groys, "Comrades of time," e-flux 11, December 2009, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/11/61345/comrades-of-time/.
6   Gillick, "Contemporary Art."
7   Ibid.

8   Lane Relyea, "Your Everyday Art World" (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2013), 9.
9   Gillick, "Contemporary Art."
10   Ibid.
11   *See Curating and the Educational Turn*, eds. Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, London: Open Editions/de Appel Art Centre, 2010.
12   See http://www.unitednationsplaza.org.
13   Robinson, Walter. "Flipping and the Rise of Zombie Formalism." Artspace. April 3, 2014. https://www.artspace.com/magazine/contributors/see_here/the_rise_of_zombie_formalism-52184.
14   Relyea, "Your Everyday *Art World*," 9.
15   Gillick, "Contemporary Art."
16   Ibid.
17   Ibid.

Philip Ocampo, Rowan Lynch and Benjamin de Boer nested in the short-lived 156 Studio Projects in the Kensington Market for a site-responsive, multimedia, collaborative show from October 4th–12th 2018. In three cycles of three over the course of nine days, the artists contributed new works to the space. The public were encouraged to come watch the artists' processes as they installed their newest work and rearranged the room in response to their latest additions. Due to the nature of the show, the artists forewent an opening and rather had a public closing once all the work had been installed and the room had been arranged with the three artists' collaboration. I had the privilege to attend the closing of this show and was given a tour of the work.

Benjamin de Boer's additions concerned play theory explored through the use of dominos, some samples of his writing–explaining various games–taped to the south wall, and a wax half-sphere with christmas lights embedded within. Rowan Lynch's work investigated natural processes which they explored by constructing an unfired and air-dried clay goblet, a drawing intricately pressed between two pieces of glass atop a pedestal of unfired clay and a handmade wax candle with various dried flowers and natural debris interspersed inside. Philip Ocampo explored metaphysical realms and mystic ritual. He achieved this by first laying a cloth on the floor and placing charms, soapstone cat's eyes, and tarot cards on top. His second work featured a set of tiles with runic symbols drawn on with chalk and his final addition was a series of dowsing rods hanging from the ceiling.

Despite having missed the initial roll-out, the show's effect was not lost when viewed at its closing reception. De Boer's domino games had

been placed intermittently throughout the floor of the space. Joining them on the floor was his illuminated hemispherical object, almost as if it were a toy itself. His work invoked childhood blissfulness and the 'what-if?' factor of game played perfectly into the counterintuitive nature of this show. Through the examination of natural processes, Lynch also played a game of odds. There was no guarantee that their clay objects would remain intact and not crumble—especially considering how many times they were moved throughout the nine-day exercise. While Lynch's pieces might have been temporary, they were perhaps the most eye-catching and impressive work featured in the exercise. The influence of chance on Ocampo's additions to this show was quite pronounced. Using traditional and accepted mystic iconography as well as tarot cards and other forms of symbolism, his work acknowledged that sometimes our instincts can be guided by a force beyond our control.

The intended formlessness of this show had much room for dispute and conflict. Attempting to create work you are proud to show while hoping and trusting your collaborators to create work of a similar caliber is no easy endeavor. While the artists' ambitious projects did not always complement each other nor did they create a theme for the show, the ever-changing organism that formed 9x[1] was a true triumph of the collaborative process.

Sameen Mahboubi is trying their best to survive in the city of Toronto.

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1 See "9x," at Philip Ocampo's website:
(accessed March 2019) www.philipocampo.com/9x.

Vaporwave Animation: Utopia in the Polygon
By Beatrice Douaihy

"Vapor*ware*" is the name given to a product, usually computer software or hardware, that has been advertised to the public, and whose production is either on hiatus, or still in the conceptual stage. It is also the origin of the name for the post-internet subculture that is "vapor-*wave*,"[1] a micro-genre that embraces the sonic and visual aesthetics of the 1980's through the early 2000's. The name pokes fun at the late capitalist practice of promising non-existent products, and evidences vaporwave's preoccupation with consumerism and emptiness, both figurative and literal. It also makes reference to the twentieth century conviction that technological advancement would be the harbinger of a utopian society. Enter the internet age, and there is a far more jaded perception of technology. For Generation Y and Z, vaporwave has emerged as a tool for critical commentary of market-oriented, and therefore, socially manipulative, technological innovation.[2]

'Digital natives' find themselves feeling anxiety as victims of this impersonal impetus that orchestrated the cultural elements of their childhood experiences,[3] and seek to repair this anxiety with the pro-sumption of vaporwave products, the warm glow of nostalgia providing the cushion. Criticism is not the only principle that dictates vaporwave, since there is also a grasp at encapsulating the emotion of nostalgia, an action with inherently sympathetic motives. Nostalgia at its heart is already a dual phenomenon, an encounter with the physical manifesting as a positive emotion, with the former acting as a trigger for the latter. Hence, nostalgia is at once the catalyst and material of vaporwave content, and it is only the pervasiveness of internet culture that could have allowed such re-categorization of an abstract emotion

into an artistic tool. The "continuously evolving critical dialogue" of the post-internet world,[4] and widespread access to information has opened up pathways for new cultural connections and art forms to be created. Currently, appropriation on the internet is one such pathway, having become "an organic behaviour within the wider context of experiencing life online,"[5] and it has given rise to a self-reflexive relationship in internet art, where the internet condition informs the internet's output. Vaporwave is simply one of these manifestations, since appropriated material, consisting of external iconography and internet culture itself, forms the basis of almost all its content.

Where does animation enter this dialogue? First, it is prudent to outline what the visual aesthetic conventions of vaporwave actually are. Formal treatment typically follows the principles of early web design/computer graphics, pixel art, and low-poly 3D-rendered objects. Among the highly surrealist scenes, objects are often depicted representationally, but abstractions are embodied in artificial colour schemes and geometric compositions. Typically found elements include: "neon colours, Windows 95 glitch art, corporate logos, images of Greek and Roman busts, melancholy 8-bit images of cityscapes, beaches, and other quasi-utopian aesthetic 'elsewheres,' and Japanese anime and text."[6] The overarching theme is "capitalist alienation,"[7] recalling brand iconography, the convergence of high/low art, and cyberpunk. Similar points of reference, such as early computer sounds, corporately endorsed musak, and Japanese vocal samples, are also found in vaporwave subculture's musical counterpart. The result is a kitsch collaging of various nostalgic references. However, while kitsch is often used to highlight the "aesthetically impoverished" and "gaudy"[8] qualities of commercialism, and in a digital context, represent the information overload mediated by the pervasiveness of technology, when it comes to vaporwave, it instead takes on a sincere and panged celebration of these "degenerate" aesthetics.[9] The parameters for what dictates these aesthetics are what theorist Raymond Williams calls "'structures of feeling,' referring to a particular set of feelings specific to a time and place that informs formal and stylistic conventions in art."[10] Ultimately, the set of feelings vaporwave reproduces is "a melancholy affect through its aestheticization of the depthlessness,"[11] digital vacuity substituting for the physical experience of nostalgia, allowing the emotion to remain.

It is clear that animation makes up a massive part of the visual language that comprises the vaporwave visual culture, which has found a life of its own beyond musical spheres and permeated into the internet art lexicon. It takes only one search of the term 'vaporwave' into the hashtag search engine on Tumblr, the image-based website built around user-generated content argued to be the platform that launched the vaporwave aesthetic,[12] for a plethora of curated, animated vaporwave art to reveal itself. Some posts are looped .gif excerpts from existing animated films or TV shows, heavily edited in the vaporwave style, or if they possess nostalgic value or encompass the vaporwave aesthetic, they are left as they are. Some posts are original artworks made by online artists, who usually remain anonymous,[13] shared by themselves or other Tumblr users.

The simple fact that vaporwave art's greatest presence is on a user-generated sharing platform is also a clue towards its intentions. The democracy of such a website is in line with the concept of utopia, harkening back to modernist idealisations of technology's potential for unifying society, idealization that was marketed to fuel innovation. Vaporwave's pro-sumers wish to revisit this time period emotionally, so using digital production techniques that emerged at the time of the internet's birth is a way to cement this temporal aura. When such production techniques have become outdated, it becomes easy to associate them with amateur talents and low quality, particularly where the development of computer graphics and 3D technology is concerned. This idea of early stage digital artwork being inferior, however, is part of the appeal of vaporwave. The lack of technical proficiency in these artists' content reflects the core values of online culture, which sees itself as an egalitarian utopia, where even the unskilled have a voice.[14] In my view, this must mean that the inverse is true: low-quality production in web content symbolises utopia. This justification becomes especially relevant when considering vaporwave visual landscapes as representations of an ideal, modernised world, both a critique of such a quixotic outlook and a melancholic yearning for such optimism, spurned by childhood nostalgia.

What does it mean, then, to enliven these images with movement? Why do vaporwave visuals often find themselves in motion rather than static? When interpreting the motives for creating vaporwave art as attempts to recreate the physical experience that induce

the nostalgic emotion, or at least, satisfy a learned utopian idealism, it can be ascribed that choosing animation as the medium to translate such desires is the most visceral way for those desires to become realised. Computer animation occupies its own type of materiality that flirts with the boundaries between spirituality and functionality, for its liveliness and mechanical construction respectively.[15]

Considering animation beyond the purely representational allows it to be a vessel for transmutation and fantasy, which vaporwave animation seeks to do by giving a vivid face to the abstract emotion of nostalgic ache, and visualising an idealised universe. The ability to transfer oneself into the universe, and recreate the experiential cues that induce nostalgia in real-time, is a way to travel back in time and satisfy the ultimate goal when it comes to nostalgia: to transform it from an emotional imprint from the past, into a liveable experience once again. Furthermore, the means of vaporwave's community-based distribution on the internet plays into the utopia-centred content of the vaporwave animation, and the absence of individualistic artist identity encourages transmutation.

In fact, the current social media and video game cultures strengthen this urge to don the identities of those on the screen. The social media landscape, with its emphasis on profiles and shifting user interfaces, rendering it animated in its own right, and video games, which often employ avatars as part of their gameplay, have become absorbed into daily culture. In the post-internet age, culture does not exist separate of the internet and digital literacy, a boundary permanently broken by the explosion of the smartphone in the mid-2000's.[16] When such transferences of identity onto digital avatars become normalised, it is not too difficult to imagine that digital natives could use the medium of the internet to wear the identity of an individual who could have experienced the cultural elements that inspired vaporwave. This is a therapeutic "memory play" that exacts "compensatory" nostalgia to replace memories that people may not necessarily have had,[17] which philosopher Brian Massumi deems "a paradoxical realm of potentiality in which intensities that cannot otherwise be experienced can be felt."[18] The pro-sumption of vaporwave animation is simply a cognitive way to decode the source of digital natives' anxieties by reliving the era's positivities and affective spaces.

Beatrice Douaihy is a Third-Year Integrated Media: Digital Painting and Expanded Animation major and Digital & Media Studies minor interested in examining post-internet practices with specific regard to issues of techno-nostalgia, avatar culture, and spirituality.

1   Laura Glitsos, "Vaporwave, or Music Optimised for Abandoned Malls," *Popular Music* 37, no. 1 (August 2017): 106.

2   Sharon Schembri and Jac Tichbon, "Digital Consumers as Cultural Curators: The Irony of Vaporwave," *Arts and the Market* 7, no. 2 (February 2017): 200

3   Jennifer Chan, "Notes on Post-Internet," in Y*ou Are Here: Art after the Internet* (London: Home and Space, 2017), 114.

4   Michael Connor, "Post-Internet: What It Is and What It Was" in *You Are Here: Art after the Internet* (London: Home and Space, 2017), 57.

5   Elisavet Christou and Mike Hazas, "It's Just the Internet! Appropriation in Post-Internet Art," in *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Digital Arts* (ARTECH2017, 2017), 132.

6   Alican Koc, "Do You Want Vaporwave, or Do You Want the Truth?: Cognitive Mapping of Late Capitalist Affect in the Virtual Lifeworld of Vaporwave," *Capacious: Journal for Emerging Affect Inquiry* (2016): 61.

7   Ibid., 61.

8   Adam Harper, "How Internet Music is Frying Your Brain," *Popular Music* 36, no. 1 (2016): 93.

9   Ibid., 95.

10   Koc, "Do You Want Vaporwave," 63.

11   Ibid., 59.

12   Glitsos, "Vaporwave, Or Music Optimised for Abandoned Malls," 103.

13   Schembri and Tichbon, "Digital Consumers a Cultural Curators," 201.

14   Nick Douglas, "It's Supposed to Look Like Shit: The Internet Ugly Aesthetic," *Journal of Visual Culture* (2014): 315.

15   Kenny Chow Ka-nin, "The Spiritual—Functional Loop: Animation Redefined in the Digital Age," *Animation 4*, no. 2 (June 3, 2009): 88.

16   Connor, "Post-Internet: What It Is and What It Was," 61.

17   Glitsos, "Vaporwave, Or Music Optimised for Abandoned Malls," 104.

18   Koc, "Do You Want Vaporwave," 62.

The Machine, The Body, and The Other: Media Art That Generates Empathy

By Karina Roman

The relationship between body and technology has modified the way humans interact with the world around them, and with their own selves. How communication systems, information processing, artificial intelligence, VR, gaming, and the use of quotidian artifacts (TVs, smartphones and even home appliances) have affected and shaped human behaviour leads us to the notion of a 'new' way of being human. Feminist scholar Donna Haraway developed her idea of the cyborg as "a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self."[1] The cyborg originates from fragmentation. She approaches it as a human with no specific pure origin, including factors as gender, race, etc. As if putting together and rearranging the myriad parts of a robot, the cyborg finds itself in intersections both as an individual and as part of a collective. And it is within these intersections that technology's potential to enhance human abilities allows for new ways to connect us with one another as well—as cyborgs we can expand our ways of seeing and perhaps even feeling, not just in relation to oneself but in our relationships with others. The perception-emotion dynamic enhanced through body-technology relations can become a great tool and mediator in times where social issues emerge, facilitating conflict-solving.

The cyborg emerges from a postmodern context where meta-narratives are dismantled and individual and social bodies struggle to find their place. Here, the cyberspace and the virtual realm create possibilities for these bodies to manifest themselves while breaking the boundaries established for them as social and biological bodies. Haraway describes the cyborg as a "creature of fiction," but it is cer-

tain that for her, it is a creature that has begun to exist already and that fluctuates from real to virtual spaces, informing itself from "communications sciences and biology... in which the difference between machine and organism is thoroughly blurred."[2] In this sense, the cyborg represents a possibility of embodying the machine, body and whatever is in between.

Literary critic Katherine Hayles takes a similar approach when explaining the posthuman. She refers to it as "an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity, whose boundaries undergo continues construction and reconstruction."[3] The influence of Haraway is clear; both scholars make a point on the heterogenous aspects of this new kind of human conformed by body, technology and social context. The posthuman then is in a constant process of constructing itself, which we could relate to the constant updating of technologies and the human response to such developments. One remark that Hayles emphasizes is the role of the human body and its embodied experiences as a central source for human survival and for configuring cybernetics too. She proposes:

> A version of the posthuman that embraces the possibilities of information technologies without being seduced by fantasies of unlimited power and disembodies immortality, that recognizes and celebrates finitude as a condition of human being, and that understands human life is embedded in a material world of great complexity, one on which we depend for our continued survival.[4]

From this, we can deduce that the body is a departing point for creating and for developing technologies. It is a generative source; through its processes and materiality, it processes and produces information as well.

By blurring the boundaries between machine and body, notions of the cyborg and the posthuman raise important questions of the notion of the other. One project that complicates the equation of human-machine relations, specifically through a confrontation with the presence of the other, is *The Machine to Be Another*. In 2013, the collective beAnotherlab started an ongoing project in which participants are able to see from the perspective of another person through the use of a VR system. This experience requires two people who would 'swap' places, which means that they would see things from

the body-position of the other. This is possible because each of them wears head-mounted displays, headphones, microphones, servo-controlled cameras, and head tracking systems. One of the participants is a performer who follows the other's movements; both interact with their own selves and objects which vary according to the purpose of each encounter. As in VR immersive experiences, the user is able to see as if embodying an avatar—but in this case, the avatar is another person. The immersion is not limited to someone else's gaze; in *The Machine to Be Another*, more senses of the human body are integrated in order to provide more realism to the experience.

This component of using the senses creates a strong impression of something real. The user, by feeling at a physical level, is able to engage and absorb information more easily. Media theorist Mark Hansen argues that "putting the body to work (even in quite minimal ways) has the effect of conferring reality on an experience, of catalyzing the creation of a singular affective experience, that is, one that is qualitatively different from (but can be deployed to *supplement*) the 'verisimilitude' or 'illusion.'"[5] In this sense, The Machine to Be Another puts the body to work by appealing to the senses. The user is not only acquiring information but is being affected by it at a physical and psychological level; in other words, the body is put to work through the senses in the way it gives the illusion of feeling like the other, of somehow embodying the other. This affectivity is understood as "that part or aspect of our body which we mix with the image of external bodies."[6] The external bodies in beAnotherlab's project are the machine, with the body of the other as the main source of information. The users find themselves breaking the boundaries of machine and organism, turning themselves into cyborgs and/or posthuman subjects.

The experiences in *The Machine to be Another* vary from gender swap, mother-daughter relationships, and outsider-insider dynamics that include migration stories shared with locals, among others. A form of mirror performance occurs since movements have to be synchronized, and at times, props are incorporated in order to guide actions around them. The props are particularly helpful in *Human Library*, another project of beAnotherlab that comes from the same idea of embodying the other. It consists of the user holding a prop that will be the reference point for actions within the immersive experience

while a story is narrated in first person, giving the user the impression of being in someone else's memory. The person sharing the story has previously performed it, so what the user sees and hears is what this person has seen when enacting that particular story with a servo-controlled camera. Facilitators of the experience touch and/or hand out objects while those actions and moments appear in the visual field of the user. Like *The Machine to Be Another,* this project utilizes the body as medium and source for enabling empathy. Through these projects, the collective has postulated the possibility of knowing oneself better through the other.

The Machine to Be Another is a proposal and experimental attempt to *feel* like the other, rather than only seeing like the other. The project is therefore a great example of how "new media art explores the creative potential implicit within the reconceptualization of (human) perception as an active (and fully embodied) rendering of data."[7] The body and its embodied experiences constitute an essential source for the development of technologies and the ways cyberspace and virtual realities continue to be configured. The continuously-developing technology-body relationship generates new possibilities of being, inhabiting, and perceiving the world through an interdisciplinary approach where art, technology, and biology cooperate, demonstrated most poignantly through experimental media art projects. By using technological mediation and the interaction with the other, humans are able to generate a much-needed empathy with one another in a context where *feeling* as the other may open up our minds to find more inclusive solutions during social crises.

Karina is an emerging writer currently in her third year Visual and Critical Studies; she also holds a BA in Early Childhood Education. Her research focuses on the relation between pedagogy and the arts.

1   Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1991), 31.

2   Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 36.

3   Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3.

4   Hayles, "How We Became Posthuman," 5.

5   Mark Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 39.

6   Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*, 100.

7   Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*, 106.

Going Down in Flames: Burtynsky's Bittersweet Anthropocene
By Stephanie Ligeti

We've all seen it: social media posts of a confused and withered white bear pawing its way through melting polar ice caps, grey smog so thick you cannot see the moon, and television commercials of baby ducks being scrubbed squeaky-clean with a helping of household dish soap. Most Westerners in 2018 are aware of the negative effects of globalization, but photographer Edward Burtynsky, and filmmakers Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier, spent four years documenting the dark side of globalization with terrifyingly beautiful landscapes foreign to most consumers.

Presented at the Art Gallery of Ontario alongside a new documentary and exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, Burtynsky, Baichwal, and Pencier's Anthropocene was named after "the proposed current geological epoch, in which humans are the primary cause of permanent planetary change."[1] Through a postcolonial lens, the exhibition documents the wastelands of our planet with large-format images, film installations, and interactive technologies featuring rarely seen industrial landscapes. The majority of the images are spaciously displayed within a maze of parallel walls, as if stringed together like a loose tapestry of colours and textures. The accompanying text hits you with the dreadful reality of our capitalist global economy. Rather than informing through preaching, the breadth of imperial impact is apparent on a purely visual scale.

Incidentally, many images in the exhibition leave you more conflicted than upset. The vividly green and blue lithium mines in Chile's Atacama Desert provide a startling contrast to the earthy mountainous

landscape surrounding it, challenging the notion that battery-operated cars and homes are a sustainable alternative. A colossal wall of swirling cream-coloured blocks tower over a paltry tangerine excavator in a 20-foot mural of the Carrara Marble Quarries in Italy. The work is embedded with augmented reality triggers, encouraging viewers to watch short films documenting this extraction process. The quarry has supplied many artists and architects with their livelihood, which will be a thing of the past once this natural resource is depleted.[2] Another looped video shows a 20-minute journey through the sleek new Gotthard Base Tunnel in Switzerland. The world's longest railway saves fuel and allows for fewer cars and trucks on the road, however, 17 years' worth of rock strata was bored through to build it.[3] Could our efforts toward environmental and technological innovation be futile in the wake of globalization and a vastly-growing population?

The artists' own extensive use of non-renewable resources ironically comes into question when considering the making of an exhibition to this scale. It is worthwhile to also consider the potential futility of their message: can the average viewer of this exhibition do much to repair our world without intense government intervention? As the exhibition comes to an end, wall didactics vaguely explain how the artists offset their carbon emissions through a company called Less Emissions.[4] While it is possible to perceive this as either a call to action for fellow consumers or a stingy excuse, *Anthropocene* is nonetheless successful in colourfully illustrating modernity's inevitable annihilation of our poor planet.

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1   Nicholas de Pencier, Edward Burtynsky, and Jennifer Baichwal, *The Anthropocene Project*: (accessed October 20, 2018) theanthropocene.org/..
2   Didactic panel, *Anthropocene*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON.
3   Ibid.
4   Pencier, Burtynsky, and Baichwal, *The Anthropocene Project*.

Site-Specific, Performative Eco-Art in the Context of Global Environmental Crisis

By Genevieve Lutsch

In light of recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. government's Fourth National Climate Assessment, it is reasonable to predict that the art world may witness a surge of work aimed at responding to the deteriorating environmental state. This type of work is most commonly exemplified by exhibits such as *Anthropocene* at the Art Gallery of Ontario, in which concepts are aestheticized and thus valuable as commodities. While this essay does not seek to criticize *Anthropocene* simply for the sake of it, the exhibit will be compared to the practice of eco-performance as an alternative for working with similar concepts in a more productive and relatable way. This essay will examine two case studies: *Blued Trees Symphony* by Aviva Rahmani and *Indeterminate Hikes +* by ecoarttech. The two examples represent different approaches to eco-art which aim to repair and restructure relations between humans and the earth both through interaction and site-specificity.

Before jumping into the case studies of the preceding paragraphs, it is important to analyze certain aspects of *Anthropocene* that render it commodifiable as revelatory eco-art curated to be exhibited in a traditional gallery setting. The *Anthropocene* artists Edward Burtynsky, Jennifer Baichwal, and Nicholas de Pencier claim that "[their] ambition is for the work to be revelatory, not accusatory, as [they] examine human influence on the Earth."[1] Yet, standing in front of the desolate photographs of *Anthropocene*, one cannot help but ask: what, exactly, is being revealed? With climate change being a prominent, highly publicized issue, does this work reveal anything new to its mostly

Canadian, city-dwelling audience? Does the current environmental crisis not call for revelations that propel solutions? The artists state that their work "take(s) us to places we are deeply connected to–but normally never see,"[2] which prompts the question: are we really connected to these places? With the extreme separation of the individual from the system that prevails in late capitalism, is it possible for *Anthropocene*'s audience to connect to these desolate landscapes enough to actually seek or imagine solutions? Or does the immensity of what is revealed further separate the individual from the system? The vast scale of destruction that *Anthropocene* aestheticizes may, in fact, do no more than belittle the notion that an individual or community action could have any impact on the distant sites it displays. Additionally, the aestheticization of the bleak, resource-depleted landscapes in Burtynsky's photographs allows for the art to have value in the capitalist system which it claims to critique. In contrast, performative eco-art favours *action* over aestheticization. Rather than revealing the vastness of human damage and thus the insignificance of an individual 'facing up to the challenge,' this kind of eco-art empowers dialogue on a manageable scale. When eco-art connects a community to the specific landscapes that surround them, the direct, participatory factor fosters a genuine connection that may translate into further action. While this type of work by no means claims itself as a solution to the current climate crisis, this essay argues for the many benefits that this more engaged approach has to offer.

The first category of eco-performance to be examined is best described as performative interventions that draw attention to a landscape in order to provoke a dialogue and encourage action from a community. To understand what this may look like, the *Blued Trees Symphony* project, initialized in 2015 by ecological artist Aviva Rahmani, will serve as a case study. This project relied upon the site of its installation "in prospective US pipeline locations in collaboration with scientists, and copyright, environmental policy, and real estate lawyers."[3] Using her signature blue "slurry,"[4] composed of non-toxic blue pigment, buttermilk, and native mosses, Rahmani lead participants in painting notes on trees which collectively created a musical score when viewed from above. The first movement of the piece took place on private properties owned by community members within the path of the proposed Algonquin Incremental Market

pipeline, with subsequent movements occurring in satellite locations facing similar concerns. The community members involved left their homes "armed with pails of blue buttermilk slurry and maps (as they) walked slowly through the forest… adorning chosen tree trunks with ribbons of blue paint, in the shape of waves."[5] Following the installation, lawyers became involved and the process of copyrighting the collaborative artworks began, relying on the Visual Artists Rights Act to form a barrier between Spectra Energy and the private properties they aimed to acquire as a method of stalling, or possibly halting, the pipeline project. Unfortunately, the project was not successful in stopping the pipeline's construction: copyright was eventually denied as the work did not possess (as determined by the court of law) the "recognized stature" required, and it would inevitably biodegrade into non-existence.[6] However, a more fluid definition of success allows for acknowledgment of the ways in which this project did work toward its initial goal. Political value aside, *Blued Trees Symphony* shone light on parts of the forest otherwise unnoticed, creating an interactive landscape that reimagined the potential effects of the human touch on nature. The project also encouraged collaboration and conversation between people of all ages and disciplines as they embarked on their shared mission. An article on the Village Voice stated that "for concerned residents frustrated by the limits of traditional protest tactics and stonewalled by pipeline companies and the institution… *Blued Trees* has come to symbolize—in a powerfully visual way—the absurdity of a political system that props up the rights of corporation."[7] The active approach initiated by *Blued Trees Symphony* spurred a procession of peaceful protests against Spectra Energy, all with a creative edge. These results are congruent with the Trigger Point Theory studied by Rahmani in her PhD, which examines the potential impact of site-specific interventions in catalyzing reactions on a larger scale. As a former TA for Allan Kaprow, one may infer that Rahmani's practice as an ecological artist draws from Kaprow's Happenings. Like Kaprow, her work is not conceived with the intention of gallery installation; rather, her works focus on what may result from the experiences she creates, and thus "only artifacts from her work have been shown in museums."[8] With performative Happenings as her medium, Rahmani is able to focus on the results she strives for rather than getting trapped in the ramifications of commercializa-

tion. In *Blued Trees Symphony*, aestheticization—of the trees and the forest—works towards her activist goal rather than against it.

The second approach to performative eco-art to be examined is exemplified by the smartphone app *Indeterminate Hikes +*. This category may be characterized by the insertion of a 'lens' between the participant(s) and the landscape that calls for an alternative or augmented way of approaching the landscape. *Indeterminate Hikes +* was launched in 2011 by ecoarttech: the collaborative duo of artist-researchers Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint, whose "post-disciplinary work fuses theory with creative practice to deconstruct traditional environmental categories, showing the limits of preoccupations with wilderness, nature, and the rural and exploring the sort of ethics that might arise from cities, suburbs, the cultural commons, and even the 'virtual' environments created by new media technologies."[9] The app's directions may be performed individually or in a group, or led by a facilitator. After downloading the app, users input their location (which can be any site recognized by Google maps) and the app responds by suggesting a "hiking trail."[10] At a certain point on their hike, users are notified that they have reached what the artists have termed a 'Scenic Vista,' where they are encouraged to pause and participate in a series of activities including mindful breathing and directions like "listen to the mood of the walking path."[11] The app then calls for hikers to take a photograph of their Scenic Vista and upload it to the app's public database. The distinguishing aspect of this app is the random, unstructured quality of the experiences it creates, fashioned after Allan Kaprow's Happenings and the chance operations of Fluxus artists like John Cage.[12] The hikes may take place on urban plots, in the suburbs, or at any location where participants may find themselves. The directions and Scenic Vistas assigned are entirely randomized, thus they "take on meaning relative to their location."[13] Nadir and Peppermint's version of the Happening may, then, lead participants to hike an abandoned industrial yard or the sidewalk right outside of their home, using terminology and practices typically associated with wilderness excursions in an effort to instill the same attention one would give to a national park to such everyday landscapes. The app's random directions create unique and unexpected experiences that allow for an alternative or augmented way of viewing one's surroundings; it initializes a reflection on what may occur if the

respect and attention typically paid to sublime natural landscapes was directed toward the ones we encounter every day.

The unconventionality and chance determination of *Indeterminate Hikes* + aims to break down the barriers typically perceived between the natural and human worlds, as "this separation of the social from the natural has silenced public, democratic discourse about environmental issues."[14] This merging of the ecological with the "digital, social, and cultural" aspects of human life creates a space for experimentation and dialogue that is key in provoking environmental awareness and activism.[15] Even those who participate only by browsing the database of Scenic Vistas are prompted to reflect on "why certain facts of modern ecological existence are wiped away from the representation of nature."[16] The app functions by posing open-ended questions that encourage a democratic dialogue around environmental issues—a dialogue which has typically existed solely amongst "a small number of invisible authorities."[17] Comparing this work, then, to the show *Anthropocene*, we may witness the efficacy of the former's approach. While *Anthropocene*'s vast and distant landscapes further one's perceived separation by displaying natural sites as flat and unreachable, *Indeterminate Hikes* + empowers its participants to go outside and work directly with the attainable everyday landscapes that surround them.

Drawing from key features inherent in site-specific, interactive, performative works, we may begin to unravel the aspects which distinguish the case studies presented above from environmental art displayed in traditional galleries settings. The departure from the typical gallery space—which tends to isolate and alienate the artwork from the sites it refers to—allows for works to directly respond and connect to specific sites in such a way that the audience can readily become involved. Furthermore, the elimination of the artist to audience hierarchy is essential in instilling the sense of individual and community agency that propels activist efforts outside of the art world. In her thesis on site-specific performance, Gabriella Simone Bishop describes this factor, while discussing Kaprow's Happenings, as a challenge to "the accepted passivity of the audience" where instead, participants of this type of work are drawn "to question the act, experience it fully and respond in a natural way," thus "emphasiz[ing] the importance of the audience's ability to choose how to

see a situation, if they choose to see it at all."[18] Another factor to take into account is the scale of action that is prompted by the work. *Anthropocene* demands for its audience to consider destruction of natural resources on a global scale; *Blued Trees Symphony* and *Interactive Hikes +* pose questions related to specific, local landscapes which can be directly and immediately responded to. The small-scale activist endeavors involved in these works are built to be affirmative–participants may witness a positive effect arise from their involvement in the artwork and feel more encouraged and capable of pursuing related endeavors on their own terms. Eco-performance creates opportunities for community engagement and dialogue on a manageable scale, wherein a sense of agency may be built and applied to more large-scale endeavors.

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1   "Anthropocene," Art Gallery of Ontario website: (accessed March 2019) ago.ca/exhibitions/anthropocene#anthropocene-artworks.

2   Ibid.

3   "Aviva Rahmani," *A Blade of Grass:* (accessed 2018) www.abladeofgrass.org/fellows/aviva-rahmani/.

4   Aviva Rahmani, "Narrative Biography," *Aviva Rahmani: Ecological Artist:* (accessed 2018) www.ghostnets.com/biography.shtml.

5   Audrea Lim, "How Land Art Lived and Died to Stop a Fracked-Gas Pipeline—And How It Lives Again," *Village Voice* (2016): www.villagevoice.com/2016/06/29/how-land-art-lived-and-died-to-stop-a-fracked-gas-pipeline-and-how-it-lives-again/.

6   Ibid.

7   Ibid.

8   Aviva Rahmani, "Blue Rocks," *Aviva Rahmani: Ecological Artist*, accessed 2018, www.ghostnets.com/blue_rocks.shtml.

9   Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint, "Indeterminate Hikes + | LEILA NADIR & CARY PEPPERMINT (ECOARTTECH)," *Interartive—a Platform for Contemporary Art and Thought*: (accessed 2018) interartive.org/2013/11/indeterminate-hikes-ecoarttech.

10   Ibid.

11   Ibid.

12   Ibid.

13   Ibid.

14   Ibid.

15   Ibid.

16   Leila C. Nadir and Cary Peppermint, "Chapter Nine Indeterminate Hikes +: Hiking Through the Urban Wilderness," *Performance on Behalf of the Environment*, ed. Richard D. Besel and Jnan A. Blau (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 178.

17   Ibid., 188.

18   Gabriella Simone Bishop, *Investigating a Personalised Site-Specific Approach to Performance: Selected Origins, Possible Influences and Practical Implications* [MA Thesis] (Matieland: Stellenbosch University, 2014), 20.

Reclaiming the Genuine Meaning of Activist Art in the Face of Capitalism and Cultural Gentrification

By Dominika Grzesik

The meaning of art activism is constantly in flux as it adapts within the neoliberal capitalist context. At its core, activism is rooted in the discourse between the opposing parties of a society, often-times involving those in power and those who are not. Activism and political art has become inevitably consumed and bastardized by capitalism in an effort to assimilate it into the culture industry, which in turn feeds the economy. The co-option of counter-cultural art and capitalism is ironic, not only because the two areas are seemingly disparate and contradictory in their nature, but also in the way that their relationship shifts the functionality of politically charged art to work against itself. This neoliberal trend is one that directly relates to the complex issue of gentrification in North American communities such as Toronto's Parkdale and Vancouver's Yaletown. More specifically, the renewal of urban neighbourhoods is closely tied to misconceptions about the role of artists and designers in the facilitation of displacement within these communities. It is in these local instances of cultural gentrification that a greater claim can be made regarding the exploitation of artists and creative people by a capitalist agenda that disguises itself behind the seemingly progressive façade of a 'creative economy.' In lieu of the increasingly commercialized notions of art, the new motive of activist art is to reclaim its function as an autonomous act of non-conformity. By creating art that escapes the mainstream (both in terms of material and environmental application) while acknowledging the master-narratives that exist within popular culture, the activist artist is able to reclaim the true potency of creativity as a form of rebellion.

Throughout modern history, artists have been recognized as the cultural storytellers of society. Pierre Bourdieu calls this "the ideology of natural taste,"[1] as well as a natural inclination to deliberately challenge the archetypes of society through acts of nonconformity. Many consider the very act of creating art in the presence of hegemonic power to be a radical endeavor in itself.[2] Activist art involves the conscious use of one's critical subjectivity to identify, confront, and expose societal paradigms in an amalgamation of 'doing' and 'making' that contradicts the status quo. The potency of such movements is contagious and speaks to a deeper desire to rebel against authoritarian systems, or simply towards the idealistic urge to partake in the spectacle of rebellion. It comes to no surprise that these potent messages of artists proclaiming autonomy are quickly realized by corporations and applied to the consumer-driven advertising that we see today. This tokenization of the once political practice of art-making is a common marketing strategy referred to as "movement marketing."[3] It is not used exclusively by the culture industry, but is deeply connected to the civic intervention of urban spaces for the sake of economic growth, particularly through the subtle exploitation of creative communities. Large scale capitalist co-option of art, which effectively obscures the objectives of activism, begins with the gentrification of the vernacular and local narratives that are rooted in communities such as Parkdale, Toronto.

The term gentrification describes a transformation intended to cater to 'refined' tastes and upper middle-class culture. In the case of Parkdale and other working class communities, exploitation is disguised as a kind of pseudo-progressivism in which public spaces are transformed into residential condominiums and commercial spaces. This is a form of urban renewal which favours more affluent groups and marginalizes its local, low-income and working class residents. This seemingly innocuous process partially stems from a history of artistic colonization in Parkdale from the 1970's onwards.

Prior to the development of expensive condominiums and fancy coffee shops, the neighbourhood of South Parkdale was a hub for many young and aspiring artists who were seeking affordable rent, and a creative sanctuary in which they could openly create artwork.[4] The neighbourhood was soon transformed into a location for social housing and artists' studios. Today, Parkdale has become notorious

for the recent influx of previously suburban residents occupying the now-trendy "Village of Parkdale" after these artists primed the neighbourhood as a hip and cultural locale. These artists are often blamed for facilitating the displacement of precarious populations in these fragile neighbourhoods. It may be true that artists and designers add cultural texture to communities; however in a capitalist society, their value resides in their profitability.

Former Parkdale resident and artist Adrian Blackwell describes the former 9 Hanna Street studio space that he was evicted from as a "makeshift interior [that] included an immense central area that had been used for a host of activist projects over the years… It was a functional utopian space."[5] Today, spaces like these have been transformed into stylish lofts for upper middle-class residents. The neighbourhood's distinct Victorian-style architecture and 'on-the-edge' lifestyle was a source of inspiration for upcoming artists, unlike the mundane suburban landscape surrounding the city of Toronto. Inhabiting the neighbourhood's former factories, warehouses, and studios, this new type of countercultural resident began to "prime entire neighbourhoods for the real estate industry. They [artists] constitute the first group to set up opportunities for further reinvestment and profit."[6] Some claim that the capitalization of urban spaces paired with the integration of various social classes is essential to the economic betterment of the community,[7] however this comes at the cost of having a strong cultural homogeneity that diminishes the authenticity of both working class residents and countercultural artists, their work, and the spaces they inhabit.

In instances of activist art that reveal the changing realities of urban systems, such as those discussed by Kirsty Robertson and J. Keri Cronin in the article "Gentrification", a focus is placed on redefining the relationship between urban spaces and the people who inhabit them. In Germaine Koh's urban installation, *Overflow* (2007), she collects and strategically arranges hundreds of glass bottles from the streets of Vancouver as a symbol of an overflow of homelessness within the city. The labels are torn off of the bottles which strips the project of any relationship it may have had to the market and, in itself, reveals the gritty and traumatic memory that exists beneath the façade of urban redevelopment. By collecting the glass bottles used in the installation, Koh physically engages in the process of 'binning',

while interacting with the materials in a playful way. Thus, the roles of the activist and the artist are merged and redefined through this physical engagement with the issue. The glass bottles used in her work are described as "a form of currency. They are also markers of the social, economic, and political conditions of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside… the bottles signify, among other things, the street-level economy of binning and its relationship to poverty, homelessness, marginalization, alcoholism, and drug addiction, in contrast to property development, gentrification, and our city's voracious real-estate market."[8] A similar use of lo-tech devices is exemplified by the February Group and their participatory sculpture called *Mattress City* (2007). Located in the public space of Nathan Phillips Square, the installation was composed entirely of mattresses laid across the ground as an inclusive invitation for the public "to sleep, to converse, to jump"[9] in the newly transformed utopian space.

Through the artists' unconventional use of ordinary mediums, like mattresses and glass bottles, they disrupt the borders and systematic relationships created by cities. The use of lo-tech devices and mediums pays homage to the valuable raw material of street-level economy as well as the ephemeral states of housing and rent-security for low-income individuals. Not only do the works of Germaine Koh and the February Group tackle the growing issue of inequality within these targeted neighbourhoods but they also challenge the obscured notion of activist art in today's monetary climate.

In the exploitative climate of contemporary capitalism, where radical art is commercialized and meanings of resistance are co-opted to a consumerist spectacle, artists themselves become criticized as the instigators of gentrification and inequality. It is important to acknowledge the works mentioned in the writings of Cronin and Robertson that defend and re-establish activist art as a method of countercultural communication rather than a gimmick of capitalism. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the paradoxical nature of co-option. While it is easy to blame one group or institution for the misfortunes of another, in the way that hipsters, capitalism, and realtors are all easy targets, it is often hard to tell who is co-opting whom. Whether it is the artists who fall prey to the temptations and shiny promises of capitalism to become the profit-driven 'creative class' of society, or rather the high-class groups with bourgeois values who combine

culture and money in the form of high-tech firms and design agencies, neither party would exist without the other.[10] It is in fact a system of its own in which both parties simultaneously co-opt, oppose, and support one another. Regardless of our partiality towards a particular side, the truth of the matter lies in the increasing assimilation of the upper and middle classes and a subsequently greater gap between the rich and the poor. It seems as if the globalization of art, culture, class, and its effects on the urban landscape are ironically fragmenting it at the same time.

The changing socio-economic landscape in Parkdale is not an uncommon situation. The effects of gentrification are increasingly being realized in neighbourhoods like St. Clair West and Roncesvalles, as well as east-end locales like Leslieville and Cabbagetown. As the establishment of micro-neighbourhoods increases, so does the fragmentation and isolation within Toronto. The installations and works of art discussed above aim to expose hidden truths and the methods of domination which conceal them. In this process of redefining the relationships within urban landscape, the artists are critically engaging in a deterritorialized project of redefining activism. It is in this localized project that artists can inspire a meaningful shift from the hegemonic structures of control towards a mutual discourse among individuals in a collective effort to proliferate new relations between local and global communities.

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1   Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste, trans*. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 66. http://exhibits.haverford.edu/ificantdancetoit/essays/adrian-blackwells-anarchitecture-the-anar-chist-tension/.

2   J. Keri Cronin and Kirsty Robertson, *Imagining Resistance: Visual Culture and Activism in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2011), 14.

3   Laura Montgomery, "When Activism and Advertising Collide," *The Economist*: (accessed January 2019) economist.com/blog/industry-trends/when-activism-and-advertising-collide.

4   Tom Slater, *Toronto's South Parkdale Neighbourhood: A Brief History of Development, Disinvestment, and Gentrification* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005): (accessed February 2019) www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/pdfs/researchbulletins/CUCS-RB-28-Slater-Parkd.pdf.

5   Jen Budney, Adrian Blackwell, and Gallery 101, *Unboxed: Engagements in social space*, (Ottawa: Gallery 101, 2005), 88.

6   Slater, *Toronto's South Parkdale Neighbourhood*.

7   Clive Thompson, "The Rise of The Microneighborhood," *New York Magazine*: (accessed February 2019) nymag.com/nymetro/realestate/neighborhoods/features/10754/.

8   Robin Laurence, "Germaine Koh: Overflow," Georgia Straight, February 7, 2007: (accessed January 2019) www.straight.com/article-69908/germaine-koh-overflow.

9   Cronin and Robertson, *Imagining Resistance*, 238.

10   Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *The Rebel Sell: Why The Culture Can't Be Jammed* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2004), 198.

by Jercy Dee

Check, Please! is a multimedia comic by author Ngozi Ukazu following Eric "Bitty" Bittle's time in college as a queer hockey athlete. It navigates parallel experiences of coming out both in college and in a professional athletic league. The comic began in 2013 as a multi-platform series where expansions of the story and lore are told through Bitty's Twitter account and the comic's Tumblr blog via segments such as "Ask a Wellie!" and "Hockey Shit with Ransom and Holster". Ukazu self-published the comic online using the blogging platform, Tumblr, and later transitioned to webcomic host, Hiveworks. She successfully launched three Kickstarters to independently print volumes of *Check, Please!* before officially publishing under First Second Books in 2018. This essay focuses only on the series' content posted online, and notates the illustrated comic by year and episode (e.g., Year One, Episode One is written as "Ukazu 1.01").[1] It will also reference Bitty's Twitter to further contextualize the work.

With a gay protagonist and a focus on contemporary queer issues, *Check, Please!* is regarded specifically as a *queer* story as opposed to a *sports* story. It situates itself firmly within the 'gay ghetto' genre, in contrast to queer alternative comics, though it also uses techniques of queer alternative comics. These techniques, supplemented by the webcomic format, demonstrate the comic's queer resistance. By combining different platforms and comic practices, Ukazu offers a mode of storytelling through which to create a nuanced queer narrative.

Check, Please! can be categorized as a gay ghetto comic. Sina Shamsavari defines 'gay ghetto' in contrast to alternative queer comics: "The more traditional gay ghetto comics... tend to reinforce

the dominant gay habitus, while the alternative gay comics… tend to define themselves against this dominant gay habitus as much as they do against 'heterosexual' mainstream culture, and to participate in the construction of an alternative gay–or queer–habitus."[2] Set in Samwell University and located in the fictional town of Samwell, Massachusetts, *Check, Please!* immediately demonstrates aspects of the gay ghetto. "Gay ghetto comic strips and cartoons are often set in a recognizably 'gay' location–one of the well-known gay urban enclaves in major (usually American) cities."[3] Samwell is known to have a large queer population: "Ahhh, 1 and 4 or more? Like 1 out of every 4 students here identifies as gay. Oh, Samwell."[4] In addition to being a liberal college known for being queer-friendly, Samwell is also located close to both Providence, Rhode Island and Boston, Massachusetts. Both cities are known to be more accepting towards queer people, especially in comparison to the American south where Bitty is from. This exemplifies the gay ghetto location: "The characters in these gay micro-communities ultimately are represented as being very much 'at home' with one another… Sometimes 'home' is meant quite literally, since the characters in these strips often share a home with one another as flatmates…"[5] Moreover, a majority of the narrative takes place in the Haus: the hockey team's fraternity. By having the characters living together in a fraternity environment, the comic's setting further supports the gay ghetto genre.

The characters and comic aesthetic also situate *Check, Please!* in the gay ghetto category. "They feature gay men who are for the most part young, white, and middle-class and conventionally attractive and fashionable in accordance with the dominant gay trends."[6] Additionally, gay ghetto "references to stereotypically 'gay' locations, slang, 'types' and cultural products serve as signifiers for the gayness of the characters as well as indicating a specific kind of dominant gay habitus at a certain point in time."[7] In summary, gay ghetto comics feature the following aspects: middle-class, young, white men and 'stereotypical' gay aesthetics. Bitty, the main protagonist, follows these characteristics almost uniformly as exemplified in the episode *Moved-In*. This single episode reaffirms several of Bitty's interests such as baking, house decorating, and female musical artists like Beyoncé. These interests may be considered 'traditionally' feminine–especially in comparison to the rest of Bitty's hypermasculine

teammates—and signify stereotypes associated with young gay men.

Finally, many of the comic's themes further position itself as gay ghetto: "discomfort often revolves around the characters' issues around body image, beauty and sexual confidence."[8] These discomforts and insecurities are prevalent in Bitty's tweets: "The entire time I'm trying to work in: 'oh, I play *hockey* now. With guys twice my size. Very dangerous. Goodness, I'm such a bro.'"[9] Bitty later responds to the tweet's reply: "I try so hard to bro and I fail so hard."[10] In addition to trying to qualify himself as a male hockey player, Bitty also expresses his failings to conform to masculine expectations. He laments his physique as well: "All hockey boys have magnificent butts, m'dear. ;) (Except for me. I'm still waiting for a visit from the Baby-Got-Back fairy.)"[11] Bitty's body image issues further emphasize gay ghetto discomfort. As a result, the comic may be classified as gay ghetto, rather than an alternative queer comic.

However, *Check, Please!* still displays forms of queer resistance against dominant gay narratives prevalent both within queer comics and mainstream gay culture. Bitty is the main protagonist and one of the confirmed queer characters within the whole comic. He identifies as a gay man: "So, come on, Bits—what's your type?" "*Men*." When Bitty comes out, he reveals that he was deeply in the closet due to the homophobic, hypermasculine culture he was surrounded by: "Maybe I *was* scared, you know? I haven't had the best experiences with sports teams and being anything other than… well, *a bro*." He implies that his anxieties stem from being queer.

To contrast, Jack Zimmermann is another confirmed queer character and is the second major protagonist within the comic. Aside from being physically different from Bitty, he is often referred to as bisexual by fans. Though he does not define his identity, he expressed interest in both men and women during episode 3.07, an episode which also highlights Jack's status as an NHL athlete. These aspects of Jack's identity also relate to his history with substance abuse: "And so the prince took a medicine to calm his anxiety… And he slew trolls! And he took more… And he slew dragons! But one day he took too much. And nearly lost everything." Unlike Bitty, Jack's anxieties are not based on being queer; instead, they come from athletic pressures and maintaining his father's legacy. Thus, Jack and his narrative offer a different type of queer narrative in comparison to Bitty.

This type of diversity is a technique used in alternative queer comics: "These comics are clearly motivated by the desire to present a more substantive critique of gay culture than the gay ghetto cartoonists do."[12] Though it is not explicit, *Check, Please!* actually critiques the gay ghetto narrative it subscribes to. Jack–an upper-class, introverted, masculine bisexual and recovering substance abuser–may be regarded as an antithesis to Bitty, who is a middle-class, extroverted, flamboyant homosexual. By having Jack as the second main character, Bitty's queer narrative is complemented and juxtaposed. This diversity is made possible as a result of the comic's medium.

Check, Please!'s story and subsequent success relies on the fact that it is an online webcomic. By using multiple platforms to expand the universe and its plot, Ukazu taps into the potential of digital storytelling:

> Artists looked at webcomics as a digital extension of alternative comics... artists who approached comic art as an infinite canvas either created nonpaneled, long, vertical-running comic art scrolls... paneled comic art with interactive features like menus or hypertext links, or the introduction of other media such as animation, sound, or photography.[13]

Though the comic is hosted on several platforms that include these aforementioned menus and hypertext links, Ukazu takes the digital medium further by adding an interactive, social media aspect. The comic's blog allowed fans to submit questions to specific characters via Tumblr's 'ask' feature, and Ukazu would illustrate comics where the characters themselves would answer. Bitty's active Twitter account further encourages fan interaction. The Twitter account also documents the comic's events in real time and adds elements to the *Check, Please!* universe that would otherwise be excluded from the comic itself.

The multi-platform aspect of the comic adds to its social impact as well: "[webcomics] allow for a diversity in creators and content that is only slowly emerging in mainstream comics... it is notably easy to find creators of all genders, races, and creeds to suit a reader's taste."[14] Furthermore, the success of webcomics "is most evident in how marginal fans are finding a new social space to intervene in comic book culture."[15] As a result, webcomics are a space for socio-political participation and commentary, especially for marginalized fans. *Check,*

Please! is no different: in addition to addressing the homophobic, hypermasculine culture of hockey athletics, the cast has grown to include several characters of colour, many of whom are integral to the plot. Since it is available through multiple platforms, it also reaches a broad, diverse audience.

As such, the online, digital nature of *Check, Please!* expresses elements of alternative queer comics. Firstly, the digital medium allowed a black, female author to self-publish an otherwise niche comic about gay men in athletics. By being distributed online for free, webcomics like *Check! Please* are also more easily accessible to readers who cannot afford traditional comics and/or prefer to access stories online rather than in print. Finally, since webcomics are published independently, authors like Ukazu are able to take the gay ghetto narrative and expand upon it. Online publishing does not have to follow traditional publishing methods or dominant narratives, and platforms like Tumblr allow creatives to share their work easily. Therefore, comics like *Check, Please!* are able to add nuances to coming-of-age queer stories by including several socio-political issues, such as mental health and racial politics in professional athletics. As a result, the web medium encourages queer resistance and diversifies queer narratives in addition to being more accessible for readers.

Check, Please! creates a successful narrative of queer resistance through its combination of queer comic techniques and webcomic format. As a gay ghetto webcomic, it effectively navigates Bitty's story as a result of Ukazu's multiplatform storytelling. The webcomic medium informs its resistance to dominant queer narratives because it allowed a woman of colour to self-publish, and the easy access of an online platform reaches a wide audience. Enjoyed in any combination of its platforms, *Check, Please!* is a wonderful example of alternative storytelling with nuanced socio-political commentary. Since readers can access both the comic and its author in real time, they are able to make connections between the story's themes to ongoing political issues or pop culture. Sometimes, readers are encouraged to discuss these topics directly via Bitty's Twitter account, the comic's Tumblr features, or Ukazu's online profiles. Thus, despite its humour and more light-hearted moments, Ukazu's success with the comic represents the need for queer multiplicities and more nuanced narratives.

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1   All comic citations are from Ngozi Ukazu, *Check, Please!* (blog), as of January 4, 2019.
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3   Ibid., 98.
4   Eric Bittle, Twitter Post, August 30, 2014, 9:43 PM,twitter.com/omgcheckplease/ status/505833310023868416.
5   Shamsavari, 99.
6   Ibid., 98.
7   Ibid., 98.
8   Ibid., 101.
9   Eric Bittle, Twitter Post, December 27, 2014, 3:10 PM, twitter.com/omgcheckplease/ status/548933931261624320.
10   Ibid., December 27, 2014, 3:16 PM, twitter.com/ omgcheckplease/status/548935351905968128.
11   Ibid., October 3, 2014, 7:18 PM, twitter.com/ omgcheckplease/status/518178390164398080.
12   Shamsavari, 104
13   Paul Douglas Lopes, *Demanding Respect: The Evolution of the American Comic Book* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 175.
14   Maria Campbell, "Inking Over the Glass Ceiling: The Marginalization of Female Creators and Consumers in Comics [MA thesis] (Kent: Kent State University, 2015), 58.
15   Lopes, 172-173.

Pleats Please by Issey Miyake and Yasumasa Morimura: Deconstructing the Cultural Economy of Distance Through Appropriation
By Gabrielle Lanthier

Since the early 1970's, East Asian designers have been taking their place in the high fashion industry of New York with great strides. In 1999, New York City saw the incoming force of East Asian designers with handbag designer Amy Chan establishing her first American location, in what was soon to be the fashion and shopping neighbourhood to rival European fashion capitals Paris and Milan. In 2009, Michelle Obama's choice of wearing Jason Wu's dress at the inaugural balls further evidenced the prominence of East Asian designers in the Western market. Coincidentally, the 'Asian Chic' aesthetic had been coming into popularity with Western fashion brands, as seen in the use of "traditional Asian" materials and silks, silhouettes, and techniques, appropriated in many collections such as the *Chinoise* collection by Yves Saint Laurent in 1974.[1] The 'Asian Chic' style has been circulating and consumed in the fashion sphere, both at luxury fashion brands and lower end, fast fashion stores such as Urban Outfitters and Target in the form of Kimonos, Cheongsams, and general applications of chinoiserie prints.[2]

   In *The Beautiful Generation*, author Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu problematizes the consumption of this 'Asianness,' in that it reinforces what Arjun Appadurai defines as a "cultural economy of distance."[3] These objects and garments which are coded as East Asian are desired and coveted by the Western consumer due to the object's cultural and geographical distance, creating a hierarchical scale of visuality, in which European aesthetics remain superior.[4] In collaboration with contemporary Japanese designer Issey Miyake, Japanese visual artist

Yasumasa Morimura challenges the consumption of Asianness in the the *Pleats Please* collection (1996), playing on the dichotomy of East and West, complicating this cultural distance. The collection contains a dress with an application of a reproduction of *La Source* (c. 1856), a painting by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, collaged and interfered with fragments of photographs of Morimura's nude body. By juxtaposing a white European female with a queer body of colour, this collaborative piece challenges normative gender representation, and critiques the Eurocentric point of view held by the fashion industry.

Rei Kawakubo, founder of Comme Des Garçons, and Issey Miyake are some of the more groundbreaking Asian designers. They are part of the group referred to as the *Japanese Three*, along with Yohji Yamamoto. Known for their works which challenge the role of the body in fashion using architectural elements and techniques to innovate silhouettes, their works have shifted what is culturally accepted as fashion. Previously constrained to flattering silhouettes intended to increase the consumer's sexual market value, both designers create new relationships between the garments and the wearer: Miyake places importance on the comfortable movement of the body, and Kawakubo changes the body's role as imperative for clothing design by creating unlikely silhouettes.[5]

Rei Kawakubo has been one of the greatest proponents of refusing "the primacy of the physical body in dictating forms of dress."[6] A collaboration between Cindy Sherman and Comme des Garçons, *Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body,* offered a jarring turn from traditional fashion photography. Sherman photographed Kawakubo's designs, favouring theatrics over traditional beauty. The campaign for the 1993 and 1994 collections featured photographs by Sherman including designs by Kawakubo, as well as selections from her existing body of work, many of which did not include Kawakubo's brand name, deconstructing the line between art and fashion. The collection featured clothing with bumps and bulges simulating strange musculatures, models with grotesque theatrical makeup, and unruly hair styles. Kawakubo's feminist vision of breaking down gender-normative representation as well as shifting the relationship between the consumer and clothes are common among the Japanese Three, who are known for their innovation in structure, and their collaboration with visual artists, propelling fashion beyond typical modes of dress.

A standout collection that further addressed the need for diversity in silhouettes is Miyake's *A P.O.C.* With this collection, Miyake sought to transform the passive consumption of garments into an interactive experience, where the consumer would take part in the construction of the garment themselves. The garments arrive in the form of a piece of cloth which the consumer cuts out and assembles to fit their unique body shape. At the opening of the *A P.O.C.* store in Tokyo, Miyake shared his vision:

> I have tried to embody the fact that we are all designers and wearers of clothes, both at the same time. I hope this collection will help bring my work off its pedestal whilst imbuing it with new meaning. What we have here is a deconstruction process that should be able to translate into a new reconstruction.[7]

This deconstruction and reconstruction is recurring in Miyake's work, including the *Pleats Please* collection. His collaboration with visual artists in his Guest Artist Series, including collaboration with Yasumasa Morimura, deconstruct not only the consumer's relationship with the garments materially and symbolically, but transcend and problematize gender normative representation.

Prior to examining Morimura and Miyake's collaborative design, Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres' work *La Source* (c. 1820) which is incorporated into the designs, and feminist readings of related works, will be analyzed through the lens art historian Linda Nochlin's work on a similarly titled painting by french Romantic painter Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du Monde* (c. 1866). Throughout art history, women have been depicted over and over again as objects to be looked at: nude, exoticized, and othered. *L'Origine du Monde*, whose location at the time of her writing had been unknown, is of particular interest to Nochlin. The mystery of both its location and meaning led Nochlin to follow a deep trail to locate the painting, and critique the discussions surrounding the painting by art critics and historians who had only come into contact with poor reproductions of it. The painting depicts a woman on her back, legs spread, vulva front and centre. The title speaks to the connotation of woman as source of life and artistic inspiration. Nochlin looks at one proposed explanation of this oft recurring trope, and the origins of art itself, in which art historians

Desmond Collins and John Onians point to cave drawings of vulvas by the prehistoric men of the Aurignacian period. The argument proposes that the primal desire and lust for the female body led to the origination of representational drawing itself, and that all forms of art are merely simulacra of this original desire. Nochlin posits the problem of this argument as assuming that "everything has to begin somewhere,"[8] a faulty belief which has led to the repetitive art historical process of searching for the non-existent original. In the case of "Courbet's Origin, this ultimate-meaning-to-be-penetrated might be considered the 'reality' of woman herself, the truth of the ultimate Other."[9] By playing with the trope of the female nude, Morimura problematizes the use of the symbolic woman in eliciting the penetrative gaze of the audience.

Though Yasumasa's dress design uses and appropriates a painting by Ingres and not Courbet, the idea of woman as source of life and inspiration remains primary in the discussion. Ingres' *La Source* depicts a young, white, European nude woman with a vase spilling into a spring. Water as symbolic of the feminine has also been a recurring symbol in art history, calling to the idea of origination, desire, fertility, and abundance. Morimura's act of appropriating *La Source* into the design of the dresses, with the addition of his own male body, calls into question the idea of the female body as the ultimate original, source of life and desire. The challenging of the status of this ultimate original, both Ingres' painting itself and the idea of woman as originator of desires, speaks to the notion of the hyperreal. The reproduction of the image on a piece of clothing, to be consumed by the fashion market, creates what Jean Baudrillard posits as the simulacra. If such an image can be reproduced infinitely in art books, or in this case on garments, it deconstructs the concept of originality itself.[10]

The appropriation and use of classical and historical paintings is a central focus within Morimura's ongoing body of work. A work of note which examines similar discourses is *Portrait (Futago)* (1988), in which Morimura inserts himself in the place of the young courtesan woman in Manet's *Olympia* (1863). In this instance, Morimura infiltrates the Western art canon, critiquing the overwhelming absence of people of colour by disrupting the European gaze. By inserting Japanese elements such as the golden kimono draped over the bed, as well as the Maneki-Neko, the Japanese beckoning cat, the painting

also critiques Western colonization and orientalization of the East.[11] This work, as part of the *Daughters of Art History* series, can be looked at as a work of reverse-cultural-appropriation. Some art historians have interpreted the Romantic Western fascination with representing sex work as inextricably tied to orientalist views of a hypersexualized East, as famously demonstrated in Ingres' *Large Odalisque* (1814).[12] The similarity between *Odalisque*, *Olympia*, and *Futago* appears as no mistake. In this sense, Morimura reclaims agency over Eastern sexuality, and the power which had been undermined and taken through the Western colonization of the East.

At this juncture, the frameworks surrounding both the innovations of Japanese fashion design as well as Yasumasa Morimura's appropriative work have set the stage for an analysis of the collaboration between Miyake and Morimura in the Guest Artist Series for the *Pleats Please* collection. As mentioned in the introduction, the series of five pieces feature collage-style reproductions of *La Source*, interrupted with fragments of photographs of Morimura's body. Morimura holds his hands in prayer with eyes closed, and the placement of the reproduction against the photograph excludes both his and the woman's genitals. The exclusion of their sexual organs points to the gender queering present throughout Morimura's work, and dismantles and problematizes the woman as the originating source of desire, and in turn representation itself. The juxtaposition of the black and white reproduction of Ingres' works and the vibrancy of the full colour photograph of Morimura speaks to the temporality of the work as bridging past and present, and further to the dichotomy of East and West. Morimura's racialized body depicted in full colour contrasts with the black and white reproduction of the white European female, creating a dialogue between contemporary art and and the Western canon. The black and white reproduction of Courbet's painting historicizes and flattens the image, much like the historizing of East Asian art forms in the West, whereas Morimura's body is emphasized and made contemporary through the medium of photography.

The construction of the dress also challenges normative conceptions of feminine dress, typically reserved to constricting silhouettes which emphasize feminine sexuality and slenderness. The flexible, comfortable, silhouette of the dress is simple and elegant, true to Miyake's design ethos. The design is a calf-length turtleneck with

full length, subtle dolman sleeves. The innovative pleating technique developed for this collection offers the wearer free movement, and would be suitable for various body shapes due to the comfort and adaptability offered through Miyake's use of heat-embossing and a synthetic coating textile process.[13] Miyake's decision to collaborate with visual artists for this collection, including Nobuyoshi Araki, Tim Hawkinson, and Cai Guo Qiang, also pushes the perceived boundaries of fashion beyond dress and cloth into the realm of fine art.

While the fashion world has admired and consumed Asian art and fashion design from a safe distance, the collaboration between Miyake and Morimura forces the viewer to acquaint themselves with a more nuanced reading of history, and of the East/West dichotomy. Though 'Asian Chic' has been imagined and incorporated into Western fashion through uses of floral patterns and silks, such as in the case of the Yves Saint-Laurent *Chinoise* collection, contemporary Asian designers are calling for the re-evaluation of the systems of power, gender, and representation, offering a jumping off point for the future of a more self-conscious fashion industry.

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1   Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu. *The Beautiful Generation: Asian Americans and the Cultural Economy of Fashion* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 42.

2   Ibid., 2.

3   Ibid., 11.

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5   Elyssa da Cruz, "Miyake, Kawakubo, and Yamamoto: Japanese Fashion in the Twentieth Century," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004): (accessed November 2018) https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/jafa/hd_jafa.htm.

6   Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, *The Beautiful Generation*, 71.

7   Patrick Hetzel, "Fashion as the Ultimate Experiential Object: The Case of Issey Miyake's A-POC Brand" in *Consuming Experience*, ed. Antonella Carù and Bernard Cova (London: Routledge, 2006), 128

8   Linda Nochlin, "Courbet's 'L'origine Du Monde': The Origin without an *Original*," October 37 (Summer 1986): 81-82.

9   Ibid., 76.

10   Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation, trans*. Shiela Glaser (University of Michigan Press, 1995), 46.

11   Caitlin Gorman, "Yasumasa Morimura: Appropriator of Images, Cultures, and Identities" (MA thesis, College of Bowling Green State University, May 2013), 22.

12   Ibid., 24.

13   Elyssa da Cruz, "Miyake, Kawakubo, and Yamamoto."

Awe, or The Lasting Effect of Qingbai Wares in Southeast Asia
By Madeline Link

Over centuries of international trade, China has gradually nurtured a vigorous influence over vast territories and cultures with its advanced technology, experimentation, and artistry. When Blue and White porcelain wares from Jingdezhen finally made it to Europe, they were cherished in many ways: displayed in private collections, imitated for local markets, and portrayed in Renaissance paintings as a symbol of mysticism, wealth, and the East. Eventually, these wares found their way into North American culture and are still regarded as a symbol of China's artistic prowess and knack for innovation and production.

Although these wares were widely imitated and sought after in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East, they never quite managed to replace entire cultural ceramic practices. This is, however, not the case for Southeast Asia and its imported Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279 CE) qingbai or yingqing wares. These delicate ceramics were so readily incorporated into Indonesian, Filipino, and certain Thai cultures that they became ubiquitous. Utilized in rituals, rites of passage, and routine meals these new Chinese wares, ranging from light blue to dove grey, light green to olive, were seen as other-worldly and pure due to their unique glaze and mysterious make.[1] The export wares took on more traditional Southeast Asian forms such as the Kendi, the Martaban, and the water dropper. Through an analysis of these export yingqing wares in relation to their religious and daily object roles, as well as their distinct natural and chemical makeup, the

modern reader may subsequently consider the power of contemporary wares and their aesthetic roots.

The scope and quality of these specialized vessels demonstrates how standardized the trade was between the China and Southeast Asia. Although the Southern Song dynasty saw these exports as a staple source of income for their blossoming economy, these wares had the opposite effect on the economy of the Southeast Asian islands. The total overhaul of their native terra cotta ware industry ensured that all household and religious wares were to be obtained elsewhere: namely, China's Southern Fujian and Guangdong provincial kilns.[2] The kilns were central production sites for the Southeast Asian markets and produced general bowl and vase wares alongside religious wares unique to its market: the Kendi, the Martaban, and the water dropper. The Kendi is traditionally crafted as a "ritual container for holy water, collected from sacred rivers and blessed by the gods, in the coronation ceremony of a king, who [would cleanse] himself with the water as a symbol of purification."[3] In form, its body is round and stout. The wide neck tapers to a conical spout for the facilitation of water pouring and sharing. The qing-bai Kendi was so revered in Indonesia and the Philippines that it would often either be buried with the dead or passed on through the generations.[4]

As with the imported Kendi, the dragon kiln products of the Southern Chinese provinces would soon replace almost every form of native pottery. Any sense of national pride would have been overpowered by a sense of awe found in the lustrous porcelain. The people of Borneo and the Philippines saw the celadon glazed Martabans (transportation jars), or "dragon jars," as able to "converse, chase one another, turn into animals and forest spirits, take human form, heal the sick, tell fortunes, and issue prophecies."[5] Soon, foreign yingqing wares would be present at meal preparations, food transportation, daily feasts, birth celebrations, marriages, deaths, prayer, and curse ceremonies. The wares were fully incorporated as prophetic, apotropaic vessels. Specially placed jars blown upon by mouths and the wind would foretell of impending disaster in the Tagbanuwan tradition, vessels would be hung next to the heads of enemies to drain and capture the negative spiritual energy in Kelabit tradition, and the Melanau people would rub coconut oil contained in these jars on married couples for fertility.[6] The widely-believed divinity of porcelain's origins and the

implications of its ritualistic uses justified the remarkable abandonment of the Southeast Asian islands' culture and economy of unglazed earthenware, or terra cotta wares.

An incorporation so thorough is certainly one worthy of exploration and questioning, as it denotes one nation unintentionally infiltrating and dominating another through the import of aesthetics and advanced technology. Shipwrecks and excavations are the principle way of understanding the gravity of this infiltration. Recent discoveries of the Jepara and Indonesian shipwrecks from the Southern Song dynasty demonstrate the variety and sheer volume of exported wares, consisting of vases, bowls, boxes, and religious objects. In his texts on trade between the Southern provincial kilns and Southeast Asian islands, Koh also mentions that tax cuts and exemptions were in action during the Southern Song dynasty, and "the Song government encouraged merchants to build ocean-going junks and undertake foreign trade directly with polities in Southeast Asia." Moreover, from the beginning of Chinese porcelain exportation to the Philippines to the arrival of the Spanish in Cebu, this time period in Filipino history has been coined "The Porcelain Age."[7] The introduction of Chinese porcelain wares during the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) left a lasting impression on the Filipino people, marking the dawn of the porcelain obsession. The innate power of these wares comes not just from their mysterious origin, but in fact, stems from their aesthetic morality.

The Southeast Asian recipients of the exported Song dynasty qingbai wares believed that they were products of divine craftsmanship, and thus, had positive celestial powers. This comes from the belief that these imports were so striking, so different than anything they had ever natively produced in their lustre, jade-like qualities, and glazed perfection, that they had to be made by someone close to God, influencing this feverish desire to own qingbai wares. As Mary Helms points out in her essay, "Essay on Objects: Interpretations of Distance Made Tangible," kings and higher-ups in these traditional Southeast Asian societies were not the craftsmen yet would attempt to demonstrate their closeness to these objects by either claiming themselves to be the craftsmen or collecting large numbers of these objects, thus promoting their own truthfulness and goodness by virtue of owning these objects.

Helms writes,

> Because both skillfully crafted and naturally endowed things provide direct, authentic, inalienable, and legitimizing links with times, places, and conditions of cultural (political) creations and primordial human origins, respectively, they are avidly sought and accumulated by authority figures of traditional societies.[8]

As the craftsmen of these objects were thought to be carrying on the legacy of God's initial achievement of creation, the objects themselves were thought to be physical links from current lineage heads to ancestral lineage founders; from kings to supreme deities.[9] This way of understanding objects promotes aesthetic cohesion amongst a nation and encourages the average citizen to consider the basic value of the object that they are using on a day-to-day basis. It also encourages a direct appreciation for the craft and thought put into an object.

In analytical texts, considering spiritual qualities when appreciating an object is often deemed impractical, causing Western observers to squelch their senses in a moment of pure aesthesis. However, this respect for crafted objects could come in handy in the age of consumerism. This consideration of manufactured goods could be a model for modern Western societies and their lack of aesthetic cohesion or careful craft when it comes to furnishing a house or even meeting daily needs through consumerism. Every single day creates the opportunity for urban dwellers to encounter manufactured objects, both new and old, yet it is seldom that the objects and their creators are genuinely, profoundly considered. Perhaps this is because there are now so many unremarkably crafted and aesthetically dull objects in Western society. As illustrated by the Southeast Asian peoples of the Song Dynasty, respect for an object and its crafters can break aesthetic and economic cycles.

For the craftsmen of the Song Dynasty's Southern provincial kilns, there was an unfathomable amount of experimentation and failure that occurred during the qingbai process. The simple fact that only one out of ten celadon bowls "reached the desired standard" during this period shows the mercy at which humans were to nature.[10] In essence, it is the earth's steady hand in the creation of ceramics that had an intrinsic impact on Southern island communities. When scien-

tifically broken down and contemplated, the process of the kiln-fired, porcelainous stoneware and its famous celadon glaze is a miracle.

Celadon wares, specifically qingbai or yingqing wares of the Southern Song dynasty, exhibit an unmistakable colour range due to a varying of elements internal and external to the kiln. With colours ranging from pure whites, jade-like sheens of light green and robin's egg blue to shades of dark olive and grey, there is mystery carried within every inch of the celadon wares. Beginning with the composition of the clay itself, it must contain enough aluminum oxide to withstand firing temperatures of 1200–1300°C in a wood-burning kiln. Some high-production kilns would experiment with the amount of kaolin used in the special china-stone clay, changing the resilience of the wares in the kiln to be stronger and more durable.[11] The presence of feldspar, a mineral in the glaze, determines the delicacy of the colour on the final product, along with the actual temperature of the kiln as the reducing atmosphere is sustained and the wares begin to cool. As it reaches the crucial temperature between 1200 and 1300°C, the temperature is then reduced, resulting in a smoky setting within the kiln. The presence of carbon then captures the available oxygen, reducing the iron oxide to a ferrous state in which it transitions into a bluish-green hue. If the kiln is overly oxidized, the glaze is at risk of turning brown.

A craftsman must act as nature's partner, exercising a certain amount of control over it, while also embracing it, understanding its glorious strengths and stubborn weaknesses. Finlay muses in "The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History" that,

> Judging by the variety and excellence of their vessels, Song potters had an impressive practical understanding of aesthetic effects, kiln technology, and ceramic chemistry. Their whitewares and greenwares (or cela dons) are generally considered the finest achievement in the history of ceramics.[12]

Only the unique, attentive relationship between humankind and nature could produce such transcendent craftsmanship. To quote Japanese philosopher, Yanagi Sōetsu, it is the harnessing of the "boundless power of nature existing in fire, water, clay, and glaze" that breathes life into ceramics. As long as these qingbai vessels continue to exist,

they will be exemplary of what a sublime physicalization of fused elements can be for crafters and consumers alike.

Madeline Link is a fifth year Integrated Media student minoring in Creative Writing. She enjoys seeking out the monumental in the mundane.

1   See Godfrey St. George Montague Gompertz, *Chinese Celadon Wares*, 2nd edition (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1980).

2   Rose Kerr, *Song Dynasty Ceramics* (London: V&A Publications, 2004), 104.

3   Dawn F. Rooney, "Kendi in the Cultural Context of Southeast Asia: A Commentary," *Dawn F. Rooney Cultural Archive*, 2003: rooneyarchive.net/articles/kendi/kendi_album/kendi.htm.

4   Ibid.

5   Robert Finlay, "The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History," *Journal of World History* 9, no. 2 (1998): 162-163.

6   Mary W. Helms, "Essay on Objects: Interpretations of Distance Made Tangible," in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 163.

7   Finlay, "The Pilgrim Art," 161.

8   Helms, "Essay on Objects," 359-361.

9   Ibid.

10   Gompertz, *Chinese Celadon Wares*, 22.

11   Finlay, "The Pilgrim Art," 149.

12   Gompertz, *Chinese Celadon Wares*, 22.

Fine Art, Fine Dining and Function: How Sketch Considers
What the Commercial Gallery Forgets
By Hailey Kobrin

Sketch describes itself as being a complex and unique site. The "triple dream" of Mourad Mazouz functions as a centre for fine arts, music, and fine dining. As a gallery, sketch operates under the mantra "clean artwork is good artwork," as detailed by sketch's website (https://sketch.london). Categorized as a commercial gallery, sketch brings forth a unique marriage of food and art in order to facilitate interest in David Shrigley's art, while simultaneously creating a unique gallery experience.

Sketch is located in London, England, in the Oxford Circus district. Upon entering sketch, the patron is led into a dark foyer, an intimidating atmosphere that is created by black marble which covers the entire entrance from ceiling to floor. The visitor is immediately bombarded by several impeccably dressed staff members. Passing through the entrance, the works of the artist, David Shrigley, in an exclusive partnership with sketch, are available for sale in the form of £150 tea sets. Sketch's foyer resembles a retail store more than it does a gallery space, providing an interesting interpretation of what traditionally defines a gallery. After entering, the viewer is then swept into the gallery space, which doubles as a dining room. The decor of the space is romantic, from the dimly lit blush-pink walls, to the matching pink, crushed velvet seating. The sultry pink tones are offset by the familiar whites of Shrigley's body of work, which hangs directly above the restaurant seating. The live string quartet is audible from every corner of the space.

The exhibition at sketch is monographic, featuring a single collection from David Shrigley as a part of a long-term artist programme exclusive to sketch. The most notable aspect of this artist program is that the gallery space was redesigned surrounding Shrigley's illustrations in order to highlight the aesthetic properties of his drawings, which sketch's website highlights as being "clean", and almost "child-like". In order to compliment Shrigley's work, sketch swapped their stark black and white decor in exchange for whimsical pinks. The only constant in sketch is the otherworldly washroom space, each toilet situated inside an egg-shaped pod. The redesigning of the space can be compared to a retail store changing the front-of-store display seasonally in order to facilitate sales.

Sketch's gallery space lacks didactic panels or any information regarding the works. The gallery space places focus on the juxtaposition of David Shrigley's work against the gallery space in addition to emphasizing the work's aesthetic appeal, rather than focusing on a larger curatorial idea. The gallery space at sketch can be described as being akin to a collector's den, which displays the collector's worldliness. The gallery space, accompanied by the hefty price tag of the dining experience at sketch, suggests that the ideal visitor to sketch is a person of a certain economic status. The work is not accompanied by any sort of description or paneling, suggesting that sketch visitors appreciate the works at surface level and for the value of the artist's name. Furthermore, through visiting the gallery space, it can be noted that many of the viewers chose to take photographs of themselves in front of Shrigley's work, for the sake of capturing the perfect photo for their Instagram feeds rather than discussing any political or cultural implications of the art.

Through the experience of visiting the gallery and dining at sketch, it can be understood that sketch creatively fills in the gaps left by museums in order to facilitate the selling of artwork. Acting as an observer at sketch, it was noticeable that many viewers were impressed by Shrigley's collection of work, and crowded into the foyer to inquire about purchasing the works on display at the gallery for personal collections, as well as the dining ware that Shrigley created in partnership with sketch.

The combination of dining, music, and art facilitates the sale of art at sketch, through the creation of a viewer experience that is exclu-

sive to the sketch gallery space. This combination of multiple elements of culture allows sketch to operate successfully as a commercial gallery, and creates interest in not only the art, but the experience of visiting the gallery space itself.

Hailey Kobrin is a second year CRCP major in what feels like her fifteenth year of school. As well as her primary studio practice being painting, her research interests lie primarily in political implications of "bad taste."

Heal the Wound Man
By Allen Wang

> "Once there were brook trout in the streams in the mountains. You could see them standing in the amber current where the white edges of their fins wimpled softly in the flow. They smelled of moss in your hand. Polished and muscular and torsional. On their backs were vermiculate patterns that were maps of the world in its becoming. Maps and mazes. Of a thing which could not be put back. Not be made right again. In the deep glens where they lived all things were older than man and they hummed of mystery."
>
> —Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (2006)

We begin our war with an introduction to the three scholars whose work we will synthesize. Professor Galen Cranz, in her 2000 book *The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design*, makes a case for the many ways in which "chairs are hazardous to our health"[1] through an anthropological analysis of their uses and implications, and she explores various solutions grounded in ergonomic and somatic theory. The voice of George Nelson (1908-1986), best-known in his capacity as Director of Design for the Herman Miller furniture company, is channeled by John Harwood, architectural historian, in his 2008 essay "The Wound Man: George Nelson and the 'End of Architecture.'" Nelson's rather sardonic views on design are conveyed through the spectre of the Wound Man taken from a fifteenth century medical text, a rendering of the human body as a pin-cushion of the harm inflicted by humankind unto itself. Lastly, in a similar vein of thought is the recently-passed Paul Virilio, a French theorist who offers us the generative spark of the present synthesis. In his 1996 book *A Landscape of Events*, he wrote: "The innovation of the ship

entailed the innovation of the shipwreck."[2] This insight, referred to as the *integral accident*, captures the fallibilistic notion that whenever we invent a new technology, we also invent the failure of said technology. Applying it to Cranz's work, we arrive at a revised formulation: the innovation of the chair entailed the innovation of the ergonomic problem. Humankind, through the seemingly-innocuous invention known as *seating*, has instigated a war against its own body, and it is both the aggressor and the lone casualty. It has victimized itself. We begin our paper with an open thesis: can we *Heal the Wound Man*?

1. The Chair, Weaponized

To understand the chair as a weapon, we begin with Nelson, whose argument is grounded in the historical dialectic of weaponry. His fundamental observation is that weapons have been designed from the outset to maximize two attributes, range and lethality, and thus empower us to do more killing at a distance. Beginning with the hand-held rock, which "had the great virtue of being harder than the human skull," and moving through the Stone Age club (a rock with longer reach and greater leverage), the bow and arrow, Medieval gunpowder, and eventually modern-age missiles, Nelson interprets this iterative development as "manifestations of a design to separate oneself as radically as possible from one's intended victim." The *aesthetics of war* instigated by this new spatial relationship is "A's ability to occupy B's [distant and seemingly autonomous] space without his knowledge"– the element of surprise. The great danger in chair design is this disconnection between the design ("A") and the user ("B"), where the act of injury, the ergonomic problem, is mediated indirectly through the errant weapon (the chair-object).[3] In Nelson's characteristic prose, "the designers have designed the excitement out of killing. We will never see the whites of their eyes again."[4]

Cranz gives a detailed account of our chair dilemma, which can be summarized in two main points. First up is the ergonomic issue with the physical act of sitting–"sitting is hard work," she writes. "It strains the spinal column, back muscles, lower back nerves, and diaphragm."[5] Second is the social implications of chairs as a projection of power relations through the "privilege" of sitting, whether in a hierarchical culture or in a colonialist dichotomy between those who sat and

those who stood or squatted.[6] What unifies the historical narratives of both writers is a major turning point around the first half of the twentieth century: industrialization and total war. The final advancement in the killing potential of weapons was not range or lethality, but ubiquity. Mass production in the military-industrial complex meant that in the hands of every soldier was a sophisticated, well-designed instrument of killing, and when those same wartime factories were adapted for peacetime applications, every office and household could readily afford a plethora of furnishings. The consequence of ubiquity is that chairs have intimate access to the private spaces of most people on earth, something which conventional weapons of war and even Nelson's great end-all of weapons, the atomic bomb, could never hope to achieve.

If we extend this logic a step back, we come to the disturbing realization that the designer of the chair wields an arsenal comparable to the U.S. President himself. Nelson's description of push-button warfare is applicable here, saying that "the button is utterly neutral, does nothing but wait for the approach of a finger, and, because of the disparity between the light touch and possibly massive consequences, has become a metaphor for modern power fantasies. Any idiot can push it."[7] One could say that design is the world's most dangerous profession. The detachment between the act of violence and its far-reaching consequences leads to a disturbingly-detached, anti-humanist paradigm.

2. The Body, Objectified

In the world of push-button warfare, brutality takes an impersonal character. The spectre of the Wound Man is the ultimate representation of this radical objectification of the human body because of its anonymity, belonging to no one in particular. This idea resonates within the greater ethos of Modernism, in which Nelson himself was heavily implicated in his career–universal design for the idealized human "subject." Cranz, in describing the "designer chair," builds a case that the Modernists "were not particularly interested in responding to the functions of their own bodies," with the deciding emphasis placed on the expression of aesthetic ideas instead.[8] In this interpretation, the Wound Man is tied inextricably to the results of the machine

aesthetic of companies like Nelson's own Herman Miller, both in the "machine-like shapes" of the wounds on its body and its complete objectivity as a limp target dummy—the projection of the true universal user, constructed out of pure negative space, wrought into distortion on the assembly line.

But according to Cranz, ergonomics is not actually the full answer. In an eerie evocation of the same machine aesthetic, she writes: "Supposedly, ergonomics is the study of the relation between people and the machines in their immediate environment, but somehow the people in this equation get left out. Most ergonomic research implicitly treats people as if they too were machines with interchangeable parts. In reality, we all know that our bodies are interdependent systems."[9] At this point halfway through her book, a critical paradigm shift occurs. In order to bring the people back into the equation, rather than concentrating on ergonomics-driven anthropometry, she embraces her socio-psychological inclination by turning to somatics, which she describes as "an integrated body-mind perspective… Essentially educational, one definition is that it 'involves the whole human being, focusing in a practical way on the interactions of posture, movement, emotion, self-concept, and cultural values.'" For example, she emphasizes the body's need "to keep posture varied and the body moving. We need to consider not just different ways to sit, but also ways to incorporate a variety of postures—including lying and standing—into our lives."[10] This synthesis of ergonomics with somatics creates a holistic vision of *body-conscious design* as a practice which is uniquely responsive to the human body and mind—using subjectivity to tame a discipline which has always tended towards objectification.

Linking body-conscious design with Nelson's dialectic of weaponry, we see that it is equivalent to the design of a suit of armour, in that "the generative assumption upon which [it] is based is the projected vulnerability of the body that it is to protect and the recognition of the vulnerability of one's defensible territory." Unfortunately, this reveals that our entire expedition was in fact doomed from the start. In the words of Harwood, "the suit of armor—and many other objects, especially those designed ergonomically—demonstrate the productivity of the wound. Rather than preventing the wound, the suit of armor is the wound, rendered into objecthood through a technique of mimetic projection."[11] Along the same lines as the integral accident, because the

suit of armour is created in response to a wound (or the threat of one), it is in fact *caused* by the wound, and so *it is a wound itself*. The true extent of the devastation wreaked by the chair-weapon is that it brings into necessity some way to pacify its own existence whether through curative or preventative measures. So as the innovation of the chair entailed the innovation of the ergonomic *problem*, the innovation of the chair also entailed the innovation of the ergonomic *solution*. Paradoxically, the application of body-conscious design principles is merely another way of bringing harm to the Wound Man; we cannot heal him in this manner. We cannot heal him at all. In a succinct tautological statement: to Heal the Wound Man is impossible, because he is *already wounded*.

3. The Wound Men, Revitalized

Ultimately, we arrive at an insurmountable obstacle. In Cranz's words, "the entire scientific paradigm for chair design was misguided. Chairs *in and of themselves* are the problem; not poorly designed chairs."[12] The Wound Man rears the true extent of his anti-Vitruvian character through a pseudo-Cartesian meditation. Because I have the idea of the Man Wounded by the chair, I know the wound to exist, and so I am wounded; *I am the Wound Man*. "After all the blinding flashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we are all walking wounded," writes Harwood. "Moreover, that wounding object, the weapon, is paradigmatic for all objects, precisely because our bodies beat the marks of having created used, and exchanged."[13] We cannot be as we once were. "After reviewing all the havoc sitting in chairs wreaks upon the body, it becomes less surprising that this cultural practice could impede overall morphological development. No wonder the two African men who did not grow up in a table-and-chair culture developed so differently from those who did."[14] I would like to appropriate Cranz's mantra "Westerners can't squat"[15] (a straw man who she knocks down with somatic theory), except I would like to use it not as a straw man but as a Wound Man. Even if all the chairs on earth were to disappear tomorrow, Westerners still couldn't *squat*, because we are all *walking wounded*.

We must return to where it all began, with Virilio. So as his integral accident sparked our initial conflagration, so may his Accident

Museum give us consolation amongst the ashes. We must expose ourselves to the "accident" of the chair through "the science of the anti-museum, a public platform for what never gets exposed, but exposes us endlessly to major hazards."[16] In this anti-museum, we must create an exhibition dedicated to failures, rather than successes. We must make room for fallibilism, going "beyond an ideology of progress, linear and uninterrupted, excluding the importance of the mishap or the beneficial mistake."[17] Virilio echoes Nelson's thoughts on the end of architecture; he writes that "it would be a matter of creating a new kind of scenography in which only what explodes and decomposes is exposed... An 'aesthetics of disappearance,' whether gradual or instantaneous; no longer an aesthetics of appearance, of the progressive emergence of a style, genre, or scientific author." The Accident Museum is a monument to our collective mourning for lost innocence, a mausoleum, but it is not comprised of artifacts nor is it even an architectural structure. Rather, Virilio seeks to leverage the ubiquity of the television screen as his Accident Museum—a temporal, experience-based medium "in which blitz cinemacrophotography [sic], video, and computer graphics would be absolutely essential."[18]

Virilio's prescription for the terminally-ill Wound Man, written in the hard-to-read prose of doctors, is not a cure but a new spiritual perspective. The Accident Museum has only one exhibit, and it is *not* the Wound Man, despite what you may have expected—although we may come to internalize it as a symbol of forgiveness, a Cristo Redentor figure of absolution, a mortally-wounded Christ figure on the cross. No, the Wound Man abides in all of us because we are all walking wounded. As a species, the first step on our path to revitalization is acceptance. Through this, we vanquish the ghost of Hamlet's father haunting us from the grave. We tame it. The greatest ubiquity of all is that *we are the Wound Men*, and what we watch on the Museum's airwaves, reclining day after day in the comfort of our own homes, from the comfort of our own homes, is *us*, reflections of our fellow human beings scarred and wounded in blazing glory.

This is a condensed version of the original essay, written 2018.12.04.2040.

Allen Wang is a student in third-year Industrial Design at OCAD U. The only thing he enjoys more than doing conceptual projects is reading about them, and the only thing he enjoys more than reading about conceptual projects is writing about them. After all, the innovation of the concept entailed the innovation of discourse about the concept.

1   Galen Cranz, *The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 96.

2   Paul Virilio, "Eight: The Accident Museum" in *A Landscape of Events*, trans. Julie Rose (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), 54.

3   John Harwood, "The Wound Man: George Nelson and the 'End of Architecture,'" *Grey Room* 31 (Spring 2008): 98-99.

4   Ibid., 101-102.

5   Cranz, 97.

6   Cranz, 33; 25.

7   Nelson, quoted in Harwood, 102-103.

8   Cranz, 83.

9   Ibid., 119.

10   Ibid., 120; 185.

11   Harwood, 104.

12   Cranz, 96.

13   Harwood, 104.

14   Cranz, 101.

15   See ibid., 98.

16   Virilio, 55.

17   Virilio, 56.

18   Virilio, 59.

Fabricating Authority: Personified Anonymity in the Work of Jim Joe
By Isabelle Fellini

Over the past decade, graffiti writer Jim Joe has earned themself a devoted group of followers through their witty and elusive statements, disorderedly scrawled across the streets of New York City. Despite being completely anonymous and including a minimal amount of visual and contextual information in their work, they have become an acclaimed figure in certain communities and have managed to carve out a style and a voice that is distinctly recognizable. While Jim Joe seemingly refuses an identity and instead presents themself as an anonymous figure, the overtly recognizable characteristics of their work contradict this and cultivate a personified anonymity. This personified anonymity is carefully constructed through Jim Joe's rejection of stylistic adornment, as well as through their interactions with site, which both draw from graffiti's history as an anti-establishment practice. Their personified anonymity is furthered by their engagement with written language and linguistic forms–namely the aphorism and truism forms–that are traditionally tied to anonymity and work in order to emulate and simultaneously deconstruct ideas of power and authority. Jim Joe maintains a personified anonymity in order to appropriate tools for the cultivation of power, and performs both an enactment and a subversion of authority in doing so, continuing a practice that graffiti writers have been concerned with since the emergence of the medium.

Isabelle Fellini is a recent graduate of the Visual and Critical Studies program, as well as an emerging writer, curator and artist.

New Media Gray Zone: The Participatory Exhibition Forms of
Char Davies' *Osmose* and Porpentine Charity Heartscape's
With Those We Love Alive
By Lex Burgoyne

At the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art in 1995, Char Davies'
computer-generated virtual reality environment *Osmose* was track-
ing and responding to the breathing of those who entered its space.
This highly personal experience was simultaneously extrapolated
into an audience area for other museum visitors to view. Just over two
decades later, Porpentine Charity Heartscape's web based, free-to-
play hypertext narrative *With Those We Love Alive* was projected onto
a wall, enlarged for spectators, in the Whitney Museum of American
Art's 2017 Biennial. The work asks its reader to draw on their skin,
and make reports on their breathing. The exhibition of *Osmose* and
With Those We Love Alive seems paradoxical: their highly embodied
nature challenges the museum's purpose of public display, and this
very display, as well as their digital affordances, fracture the works
into something simultaneously private and public. Using critic Claire
Bishop's recent proposition of the exhibition 'gray zone' that arises
from the contemporary museum's adaptation to new technology, this
paper analyzes how the exhibition forms of *Osmose* and *With Those
We Love Alive* not only challenge traditional exhibition practices,
but challenge the museum's traditional model of its viewing subject.
I argue that the ways in which *Osmose* and *With Those We Love Alive*
are adapted for public exhibition position the museum spectator as a
participant in the works.

Lex is an emerging writer and artist from OCAD University. They have developed and hosted community arts workshops for Pride Toronto, Xpace Cultural Centre, the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Paperhouse Studio, and The Student Press.

The Journal of Visual & Critical Studies collects and celebrates some of the best undergraduate writing at OCAD University. Comprising critical essays, exhibition reviews, and thesis abstracts, this anthology reflects the unique approaches to art history and visual culture that are being explored at the school.

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